THE

# MAGAZINE OF HISTORY

WITH

## NOTES AND QUERIES

Extra Number—No. 18

A JOURNAL OF A YOUNG MAN OF MASSACHUSETTS (1754-1846) - *Benjamin Waterhouse, M. D.*

WILLIAM ABBATT

410 EAST 32D STREET, NEW YORK

1911

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# A JOURNAL OF A YOUNG MAN OF MASSACHUSETTS

BENJAMIN WATERHOUSE, M. D.
(1754-1846)

LATE A SURGEON, ETC.

BOSTON
ROWE & HOOKER
1816

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NEW YORK
Reprinted
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(Being Extra No. 18 of THE MAGAZINE OF HISTORY WITH NOTES AND QUERIES.)

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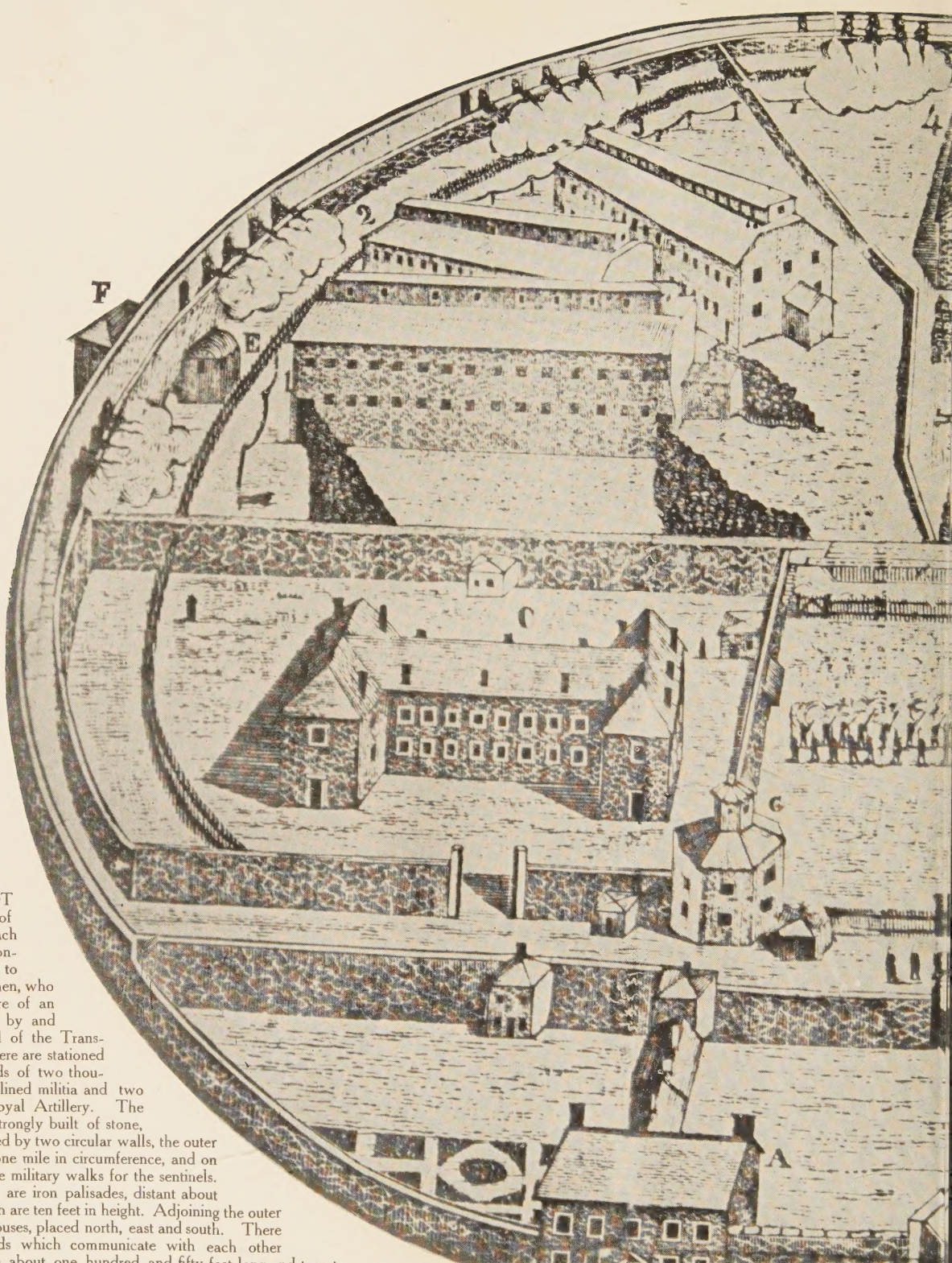
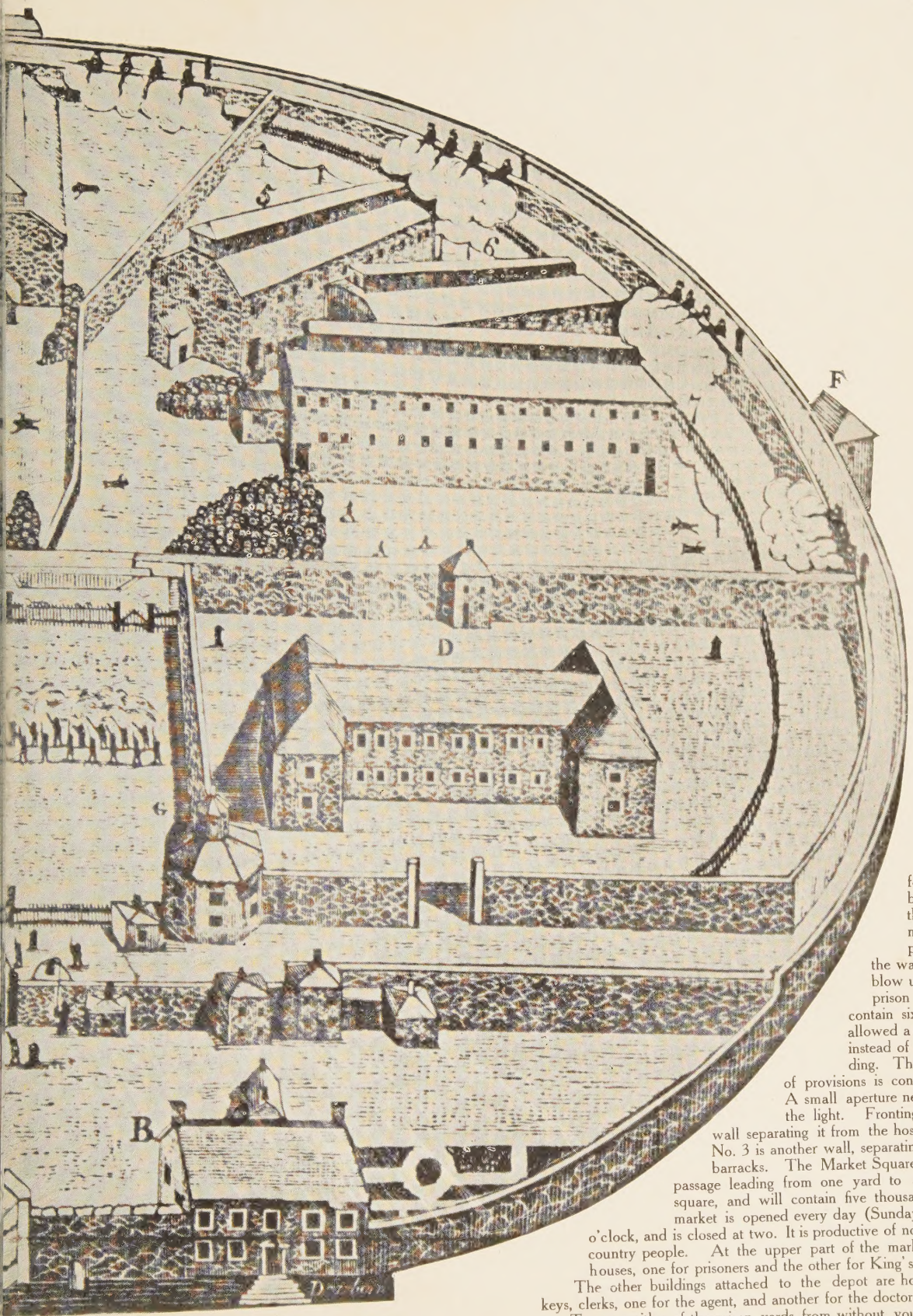



THIS DEPOT consists of seven prisons, each calculated to contain from eleven to fifteen hundred men, who are under the care of an agent appointed by and under the control of the Transport Board. Here are stationed as guards upwards of two thousand well-disciplined militia and two companies of Royal Artillery. The prisons are all strongly built of stone, and are surrounded by two circular walls, the outer wall measuring one mile in circumference, and on the inner wall are military walks for the sentinels. Within this wall are iron palisades, distant about twenty feet, which are ten feet in height. Adjoining the outer wall are guard houses, placed north, east and south. There are separate yards which communicate with each other through a passage about one hundred and fifty feet long and twenty broad, guarded on each side by iron bars, over which, and fronting No. 4, is a military walk for sentinels. Opposite this passage is the Market Square; passing into either yard you go through two iron gates, so that all communication may be stopped at pleasure, which is often done to annoy and vex the prisoners. The first yard contains three prisons, viz. Nos. 1, 2, and 3, of which Nos. 1 and 3 only are occupied, No. 2 standing void. The next yard, which contains No. 4, is solely occupied by blacks, and is separated from the other yards by two stone walls about fifteen feet in height. The next yard contains Nos. 5, 6, and 7, of which Nos. 5 and 7 only are occupied, No. 6 standing void.

## DESCRIPTION OF DARTI

The inside of the prisons present a melanch
rather calculated to receive cattle than human be
railings) stands the condemned prison, a place of

**A. Surgeon's house.** **B. Capt. Shortland's house.** **C. Hospital.** **D.**




four persons having been sentenced by the British Government to suffer imprisonment during the war for attempting to blow up a prize. This prison is calculated to contain sixty men, who are allowed a blanket and straw instead of their ordinary bedding. Their daily allowance of provisions is considerably reduced. A small aperture near the roof admits the light. Fronting No. 1 yard is a wall separating it from the hospital, and fronting No. 3 is another wall, separating it from the inner barracks. The Market Square (which fronts the passage leading from one yard to another) is nearly square, and will contain five thousand persons. The market is opened every day (Sundays excepted) at 11 o'clock, and is closed at two. It is productive of no small profit to the country people. At the upper part of the market are two storehouses, one for prisoners and the other for King's stores, &c.

The other buildings attached to the depot are houses for the turnkeys, clerks, one for the agent, and another for the doctor.

To enter either of the prison yards from without, you must pass through five gates. Fronting the outer gate is a reservoir of water, which is brought the distance of six miles by means of a canal which supplies the different yards. The hospital is under the supervision of a physician, who has two assistants. The buildings with numbers attached are prisons of 180 feet long by 40 feet wide, except Nos. 2 and 6, which are something smaller.

## OR PRISON, ENGLAND.

l disagreeable aspect; one would imagine they were
North of No. 1 (between the inner wall and iron
nent for various offenses committed by individuals;

acks. **E. Cachot, or Black-hole.** **F. Guard houses.** **G. Store house.**

*Facsimile of the original.*

A

# JOURNAL

OF

## A YOUNG MAN OF MASSACHUSETTS,

LATE

A SURGEON ON BOARD AN AMERICAN PRIVATEER

WHO WAS CAPTURED AT SEA BY THE BRITISH, IN MAY, EIGHTEEN HUNDRED AND THIRTEEN, AND WAS CONFINED FIRST,

AT MELVILLE ISLAND, HALIFAX, THEN AT CHATHAM,

IN ENGLAND,

AND LAST, AT DARTMOOR PRISON.

INTERSPERSED WITH

OBSERVATIONS, ANECDOTES AND REMARKS

TENDING TO

ILLUSTRATE THE MORAL AND POLITICAL CHARACTERS OF THREE NATIONS.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A CORRECT ENGRAVING OF DARTMOOR PRISON,

REPRESENTING THE MASSACRE OF AMERICAN PRISONERS,

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

"Nothing extenuate, or set down aught in malice,"

.....SHAKESPEARE

BOSTON:

PRINTED BY ROWE AND HOOPER

.....

1816

*District of Massachusetts, to wit:*

*District Clerk's Office*

BE it remembered, that on the sixth day of March, A. D., 1816, and (L. S.) in the fortieth year of the Independence of the United States of America, ROWE & HOOPER, of the said District, have deposited in this Office, the title of a Book, the Right whereof they claim as Proprietors, in the words following, to wit:

"A Journal of a Young man of Massachusetts, late a Surgeon on board an American Privateer, who was captured at Sea by the British, in May, eighteen hundred and thirteen, and was confined first, at Melville Island, Halifax, then at Chatham, in England, and last at Dartmoor Prison. Interspersed with Observations, Anecdotes and Remarks, tending to illustrate the moral and political characters of three nations. To which is added, a correct Engraving of Dartmoor Prison, representing the Massacre of American prisoners. Written by himself. "Nothing extenuate, or set down aught in malice."..... Shakespeare."

In conformity to the Act of the Congress of the United States, entitled, "An Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts and Books, to the Authors and Proprietors of such Copies, during the Times therein mentioned;" and also to an Act entitled, "An Act supplmentary to an Act, entitled an Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies durng the times therein mentioned; and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving and etching historical, and other prints."

WM. S. SHAW,

*Clerk of the District of Massachusetts.*

TO THE

# COMMON SENSE

AND

HUMANE FEELINGS

*OF THE PEOPLE OF AMERICA*

THIS JOURNAL IS INSCRIBED,

BY

A LATE PRISONER OF WAR WITH THE BRITISH

*Massachusetts, County of*
*Hampshire*, 1815

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE

Benjamin Waterhouse, the author of the fullest account of the experiences of American prisoners of war in England during the War of 1812, was born in Newport, R. I., March 4, 1754, and died in Cambridge, Mass., October 2, 1846. He studied medicine in Newport, London, Edinburgh and Leyden, where he was graduated in 1780. Settling in Newport he was professor of medicine at Harvard from 1783 to 1812 and professor of Natural History at Brown University from 1784 to 1791. In 1812 he retired from the practice of medicine, and became medical supervisor of the military posts in New England, a post he held until 1825. In 1799 he subjected his family to the experiment of vaccination, which he vindicated against public and professional ridicule. He was an ardent supporter of Jefferson, and author of several medical books; but the one we reprint and an essay on "Junius" are his only secular productions.

The "Journal of a Young Man" does not appear to be autobiographical — as he is not recorded as serving in the Navy — yet it is so vivid and lifelike that it must have been written or dictated by a participant in the scenes described. Possibly the real author shunned publicity — and so did Dr. Waterhouse, for no name was ever appended to the book, but Mr. Sabin is authority for crediting it to him.

EDITOR.

# A JOURNAL OF A YOUNG MAN OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN December 1812, I found a schooner fitting out of Salem as a privateer. She had only four carriage guns and ninety men. By the fifth of January, 1813, she was ready to sail and only wanted some young man to go as assistant surgeon of her. The offer was made to me, when without much reflection or consultation of friends, I stepped on board her in that capacity, with no other ideas than that of a pleasant cruise and making a fortune. With this in view we steered for the coast of Brazil, which we reached about the first of February.

Our first land-fall was not the most judicious, for we made the coast in the night, and in the morning found ourselves surrounded with breakers. Fortunately for us a Portuguese schooner was outside of us, and we hoisted out our boat and went on board her and received from her commander and officers directions for clearing ourselves from these dangerous breakers. We were then about sixty miles below Cape St. Roque. The captain of the Portuguese vessel kindly informed us where to get water, in a bay then before us. We had English colours flying, and all this time passed for a British vessel.

In a few hours we cast anchor in the bay, when our Captain went on shore and when he had discovered the watering place he returned on board, and sent his water casks to be filled; but the inhabitants collected around our men, and shewed, by their gestures and grimaces, a disposition to drive us away. It is probable that they only wanted to make us pay for the water; for it is the way of all the inhabitants of the sea shores every where to profit by the distresses of those who are cast upon them. But pretending not to understand them, we got what water was necessary.

The next day a Portuguese ship of war came into the bay, on which we thought it prudent to haul off, as we thought it not so easy to impose on a public ship as a private one, with our English colours and uniform. In beating up to Pernambuco we spoke with vessels every day, but they were all Portuguese. When near to St. Salvadore we were in great danger of capture by a British frigate, whom we mistook for a large merchantman until she came within half musket shot of us, but luckily for us it died away calm, when we out with our oars, which seamen call *sweeps,* and in spite of their round and grape shot we got clear of her without any serious injury.

We would remark here that sailors have a dialect of their own, and a phraseology by themselves. Instead of right side and left side they say *starboard* and *larboard.* To tie a rope fast is to *belay it.* To lower down a sail, or to pull down a colour, is to *dowse* it, and so of many other things. These peculiar phrases have been adopted from the Dutch and from the Danes, nations from whom the English learnt navigation. We may occasionally use some of these terms, when it cannot well be avoided.

Our Captain was not an American, neither was he an Englishman. He was a little bit of a man, of a swarthy complexion, and did not weigh perhaps more than an hundred pounds by the scale. During the firing our little man stood upon the taffrail, swung his sword, d—d the English and praised his own men. He had been long enough in the United States to acquire property and information, and credit enough to command a schooner of four guns and ninety men. The crew considered him a brave man and a good sailor, but not over generous in his disposition. Whether the following is a proof of it, I cannot determine:

He allowed the crew but one gill of New England rum per day, which they thought an under dose for a Yankee. They contended for more, but he refused it. They expostulated and he remained obstinate; when at length, they one and all declared that they

would not touch a rope unless he agreed to double the allowance, to half a pint. The Captain was a very abstemious man himself, and being very small in person he did not consider that a man four times as big required twice as much rum to keep his sluggish frame in the same degree of good spirits. He held out against his crew for two days, during which time they never one of them so much as lifted a spun yarn. The weather was, be sure, very mild and pleasant. I confess, however, that I was very uneasy, under the idea that we might all perish from the obstinacy of the crew on one side and the firmness of the little man on the other. Our Captain found that his government was democratical; and perceiving that the weather was about to change he conceded to the large and fearful majority, and New England spirit carried the day against a temperate European commander.

This habit of rum drinking makes a striking difference between the military of ancient and modern days. If a Roman soldier or a Carthaginian sailor had his cloathing, his meat and his bread and his vinegar, he was contented, and rarely was guilty of mutiny. But the modern soldier and sailor must in addition to these have his rum or brandy, and his tobacco; and deprive him of these two articles, which are neither food nor clothing, and he infallibly mutinies; that is, he runs the risk of the severest punishment, even that of death, rather than renounce them. I have observed among sailors that they bear the deprivation of rum with more patience than the deprivation of tobacco. On granting the crew half a pint of rum a day they gave three cheers, and went to work with the greatest cheerfulness and alacrity.

The next day we descried three sail steering for St. Salvadore. We gave chace to them, but when we came within gun shot of the sternmost she fired her stern chacers at us. We brought our four guns on one side to attack, or to defend ourselves, as we should find ourselves circumstanced; but night coming on we saw no more of them.

Our water growing short, we determined to gain our former watering place; but not being able to reach it easily, we anchored off a little settlement, twenty miles distant from the place where we watered before. Here our captain put on a British uniform and waited on the commandant of the place, who, although he treated him with politeness, gave evident suspicions that he was not an English officer. To prevent the awkward consequences of a detection, our captain promised to send off a barrel of hams and a keg of butter. Under the expectation of the fulfilment of this rather rash promise, our crafty commander returned to his vessel and left the place very early next morning.

It was now the middle of March, and we had taken nothing, neither had we fired our cannon excepting at a miserable sort of a half boat and half raft, called a Catamaran, made of five light logs, with a triangular sail. From the men on this miserable vessel we got information of a good watering place, where we soon anchored. The commandant of this little settlement was of the colour of our North American Indians, and so were his family, but the rest were nearly as black as negroes. He lived in a house covered and worked in with long grass; he offered us snuff out of a box tipped with silver, but every thing else looked very rude and simple. While we were getting our water the females hovered round us. They had long black and shining hair, and wore a long white cotton garment like a shirt or shift. They seemed to admire our complexions. One of these women, more forward than the rest, opened the bosom of one of our fairest young men, to see if his body was as white as his face. She appeared to be highly amused with the discovery, and called her companions to come and view the phenomenon. He shewed a similar curiosity as it concerned her, but she shrunk from it with the apparent delicacy of polished life, before so many men.

Just as we were about embarking the commandant told our captain that he had just received a message from the commandant of

Gomora to seize him and all his crew and send them to Pernambuco, but that he should not obey him. We now set sail for the United States, and had not been at sea long before we were chased by a frigate, but outsailed her.

On the 20th of May we made Gay Head, which is the shining remains of an extinguished volcano, on the west end of Martha's Vineyard. The next morning we discovered a ship and a brig standing for us. We tacked and stood for the ship until we found that she was a man of war, and then we wore round for the brig, she being nearest of our own size. We now for the first time hoisted American colours, when the brig gave us a broadside, and kept up a constant fire upon us, but we soon left her by our superior sailing and management. The frigate, for such she proved to be, was not so easily got rid of. She was to the windward of us when we first saw her. She came within gunshot about noon, she firing her bow-chacers and we our stern-chacers. At length she came almost within musket shot of us, when she fired repeated broadsides into our little schooner, so as to cut away almost all our rigging, when our brave little captain went down below after telling the men to fight it out; but they prudently struck their colours. A boat soon came on board of us with a Lieutenant and twelve marines, swearing most bravely at the d—d Yankees. But as our men had, according to custom when a vessel surrenders, seized whatever casks of liquor they could come at, soon filled out a few horns of gin, and passed it round among the marines, which inspired them with good nature, and for a moment they seemed "all hail fellows well met." The boarding officer did not appear to be so intent in securing the vessel, as in searching every hole and corner for small articles to pocket. We were soon ordered on board of his Britannic Majesty's ship the *Tenedos,* Captain Parker.

I had always entertained a respectable opinion of the British, especially of their national marine. I had read British history and listened to British songs, and had heard from my childhood of the

superior bravery and generosity of the British sailor, and had entertained a real respect for their character; and being of a family denominated *Federalists*, I may be said to have entered the frigate *Tenedos,* Captain Parker, with feelings and expectations very different from what I should have felt had we been at war with the French, and had it been a frigate of that nation that had captured us. The French are a people marked by nature as well as by customs and habits, a different nation from us. Their language is different; their religion is different, and so are their manners. All these things have conspired in making a wall of separation between us and that lively people. But it is not so with the English. Our language, religion, customs, habits, manners, institutions, and above all books, have united to make us feel as if we were but children of the same great family, only divided by the Atlantic ocean. All these things have a natural and habitual tendency to unite us, and nothing but the unfeeling and contemptuous treatment of us by the British military generally, could have separated us. With all these feelings and partialities about me, I went from our schooner over the side of the British frigate with different feelings from what I should, had I been going on board an enemy's ship of the French, Spanish or Portuguese nation. But what was my change of feelings, on being driven with the rest all up in a corner like hogs, and then marched about the deck for the strutting captain of the frigate to view and review us like cattle in a market before the drover or butcher.

When our baggage was brought on board, the master of arms took every portable article from us, not leaving us a jack knife, penknife or razor. We Americans never conduct so towards British prisoners. We always respect the private articles of the officer and sailor.

On the same day we were put on board the brig *Curlew,* Lieutenant Head, a polite and humane gentleman, and much beloved by his own crew. He is, I am informed, son of an English

Baronet. He is a plain, honest man, with easy, elegant manners, and very unlike the sputtering commander of the *Tenedos*, a man who allowed us to be stripped of all our little pocket articles. We were kept very close while on board the *Curlew*, because her crew was very weak, principally decrepit old men and boys, but then we were kindly spoken to and respectfully and humanely treated by Lieutenant Head, and his worthy surgeon. We can discover real gentlemen at sea, as well as on shore.

We were landed in Halifax, the principal British port of North America, and the capital of Nova Scotia, on the 29th of May, 1813. We were soon surrounded by soldiers, and being joined by a number of our countrymen, recently captured, we were attempted to be marshalled and paraded in military order, so as to make as grand a show as possible, as we marched through the streets to prison. The first thing they did was to make us stand in platoons, and then the commanding officer stationed a soldier on the flanks of each platoon to keep us regular, and to march and wheel according to rule. The word was then given to *march*, when we all ran up together just as we were when the strutting Captain Parker reviewed us on the deck of the *Tenedos*. We were then commanded to *halt*. As we have no such word of command on board of an American privateer, some crowded on, while a few stopped. The young officer tried again, and made us stand all in a row. Some of the crew told their comrades that when the captain sung out *"halt,"* he meant *"avast,"* and that then they should all stop. When we were all in order again, the scarlet-coated young gentleman, with a golden swash on his left shoulder, gave a second time the word of command—*"march"*—when we got into the like confusion, again, when he cried out in a swearing passion, *"halt"*—on which some stopped short, and some walked on, when the whole squad burst out a-laughing. I know not what would have been the consequence of his passion had not a navy officer standing by observed to him that they were not soldiers but sailors, who knew

nothing about military marching, or military words of command; when the young man told us to march on in our own way; upon which our sailors stuck their fists in their pockets, and scrabbled and reeled on as sailors always do; for a sailor does not know how to walk like a landsman. On which account I have been informed, since my return from captivity, that all our seamen that were sent from Boston to Sackett's harbour, on Lake Ontario, were transported in coaches with four horses, chartered for the express purpose; and that it was common for many weeks together, to see a dozen of the large stage coaches setting out from Boston in a morning, full of sailors going up to the lakes to man the fleets of Commodores Perry, Chauncey and M'Donough. The former of these commanders told the writer that he never allowed a sailor destined for his squadron to walk a single day. Those merry fellows used to ride through the country with their colours and streamers and music, and heaving the lead amidst the acclamations of the country people. While these things were thus conducted in New England, the people of Old England were simple enough to believe that the war with England was unpopular. They judged of us by our party newspapers.

The soldiers marched us about two miles, when we came to the spot where we were to take boat for Melville Island, the place of our imprisonment. When we arrived at the gates of the prison hammocks and blankets were served out to us, as our names were called over. We were then ordered into the prison yard. And here I must remark, that I shall never forget the first impression which the sight of my wretched-looking countrymen made on my feelings. Here we were at once surrounded by a ragged set of *quidnuncs*, eagerly inquiring, *What news?*—where we were taken? and how? and what success we had met with before we were taken? and every possible question, for American curiosity to put to a promiscuous set of new comers.

After satisfying these brave fellows, who felt an uncommon in-

terest in the events of the war and the news of the day I had time to notice the various occupations of these poor fellows. Some were washing their own clothes; others mending them. Others were intent on ridding their shirts and other clothing from lice, which, to the disgrace of the British government, are allowed to infest our prisoners. It may, in part, be owing to the nastiness and negligence of the prisoners themselves, but the great fault and the disgrace remain with the British. Whoever could say that criminals confined in our State prisons were infected with vermin? Were our prison ships in Boston or Salem ever known to be lousy?

The buildings on Melville Island are constructed of wood. Beside the prison there is a cooking house, barracks for soldiers, and a storehouse; a house for the officers, and another for the surgeon. There are a couple of cannon pointing towards the prison, and a Telegraph, for the purpose of giving intelligence to the fort which overlooks this island and the town of Halifax. These buildings are painted red, and have upon the whole, a neat appearance. The prison itself is two hundred feet in length, and fifty in breadth. It is two stories high; the upper one is for officers, and for the infirmary and dispensary; while the lower part is divided into two prisons, one for the French the other for Americans. The prison yard is little more than an acre, the whole island being little more than five acres. It is connected on the south side with the main land by a bridge. The parade, so called, is between the Turnkey's house and the barracks. From all which it may be gathered that Melville Island is a very humble garrison, and a very dreary spot for the officer who commands there.

The view from the prison exhibits a range of dreary hills. On the northern side are a few scattered dwellings, and some attempts at cultivation; on the southern nothing appears but immense piles of rocks, with bushes scattered here and there in their hollows and crevices; if their summer appearance conveys the idea of barrenness, their winter appearance must be dreadful in this region of

almost everlasting frost and snow. This unfruitful country is rightly named *New Scotland.* Barren and unfruitful as old Scotland is, our *Nova Scotia* is worse. If Churchill were alive, what might he not say of this rude and unfinished part of creation that glories in the name of New Scotland? The picture would here be complete if it were set off with here and there a meagre and dried up Highlander, without shoes, stockings or breeches, with a ragged plaid, a little blue flat bonnet, sitting on a bleak rock playing a bagpipe, and singing the glories of a country that never was conquered! To finish the picture, you have to imagine a dozen more ragged raw-boned Scotchmen, sitting on the bare rocks around the piper, knitting stockings to send to England and America, where they can afford to wear them. Such is Scotia old and new, whose sons are remarkable for their inveterate hatred of the Americans, as we shall see in the course of this narrative.

As to the inside of the prison at Melville Island, if the American reader expects to hear it represented as a place resembling the large prisons for criminals in the United States, such as those at Boston, Charlestown, New York or Philadelphia, he will be sadly disappointed. Some of these prisons are as clean, and nearly as comfortable, as some of the monasteries and convents in Europe. Our new prisons in the United States reflect great honour on the nation. They speak loudly that we are a considerate and humane people; whereas the prison at Halifax, erected solely for the safe keeping of prisoners of war, resembles an horse stable, with stalls or stanchions for separating the cattle from each other. It is to a contrivance of this sort that they attach the cords that support those canvas bags, or cradles, called hammocks. Four tier of these hanging nests were made to swing one above another, between these stalls or stanchions. To those unused to these lofty sleeping-berths they were rather unpleasant situations for repose. But use makes every thing easy.

The first time I was shut up for the night in this prison, it dis-

tressed me too much to close my eyes. Its closeness and smell were in a degree disagreeable, but this was trifling to what I experienced afterwards in another place. The general hum and confused noise from almost every hammock was at first very distressing. Some would be lamenting their hard fate at being shut up like negro slaves in a Guinea ship, or like fowls in a hen coop, for no crime but for fighting the battles of their country. Some were cursing and execrating their oppressors; others, late at night, were relating their adventures to a new prisoner; others lamenting their aberrations from rectitude and disobedience to parents and headstrong wilfulness, that drove them to sea, contrary to their parents' wish, while others, of the younger class, were sobbing out their lamentations at the thoughts of what their mothers and sisters suffered after knowing of their imprisonment. Not unfrequently the whole night was spent in this way, and when about day break the weary prisoner fell into a doze, he was waked from his slumber by the grinding noise of the locks and the unbarring of the doors, with the cry of *"turn out—all out"* when each man took down his hammock and lashed it up, and slung it on his back, and was ready to answer to the roll-call of the turnkey. If any, through natural heaviness or indisposition, was dilatory, he was sure to feel the bayonet of the brutal soldier, who appeared to us to have a natural antipathy to a sailor, and from what I observed I believe that in general little or no love is lost between them.

This prison is swept out twice a week, by the prisoners. The task is performed by the respective messes in turns. When the prison is washed, the prisoners are kept out until it is perfectly dry. This, in the wet seasons and in the severity of winter, is sometimes very distressing and dangerous to health; for there is no retiring place for shelter;—it is like a stable, where the cattle are either under cover, or exposed to the weather, be it ever so inclement.

When we arrived here in May, 1813, there were about nine hun-

dred prisoners; but many died by the severity of the winter; and the quantity of fuel allowed by the British government was insufficient to convey warmth through the prison. The men were cruelly harassed by the barbarous custom of mustering and parading them in the severest cold, and even in snow storms. The agent, *Miller*, might have alleviated the sufferings of our people, had he been so disposed, without relaxation of duty. But he, as well as the turnkey, named *Grant*, seemed to take delight in tormenting the Americans. This man would often keep the prisoners out for many hours, in the severest weather, when the mercury was ten and fifteen degrees below zero, under a pretext that the prison had been washed, and was not sufficiently dry for their reception, when in fact, every drop of water used was in a moment ice. People in the Southern States, and the inhabitants of England and Ireland, can form no adequate idea of the frightful climate of Nova Scotia. The description of the sufferings of our poor fellows, the past winter, was enough to make one's heart ache, and to rouse our indignation against the agents in this business.

Our people are sensible to kind treatment, and are ready to acknowledge humane and considerate conduct towards themselves or towards their companions; but they are resentful in proportion as they are grateful. They speak very generally of the conduct of Miller the agent, and Grant the turnkey, with disgust and resentment. A complaint was made to him of the badness of the beef served out to the prisoners, upon which he collected the prisoners and mounted the stair-case, began a most passionate harangue, declaring that the beef was good enough, and a d—d deal better than they had in their own country, and if they did not eat it, they should have none. He then went on as follows:—"Hundreds of you d—d "scoundrels, have been to me begging and pleading that I would "interpose my influence that you might be the first to be exchanged, "to return home to your families, who were starving in your ab-"sence, and now you have the impudence to tell me to my face that

"the King's beef is not good enough for your dainty stomach. "Why some of that there beef is good enough for me to eat. You "are a set of mean rascals, you beg of an enemy the favours which "your own government won't grant you. You complain of ill "treatment, when you never fared better in your lives. Had you "been in a French prison and fed on horse-beef, you would have "some grounds of complaint; but here in his Brittanick Majesty's "royal prison, you have every thing that is right and proper for "persons taken fighting against his crown and dignity. There is "a surgeon here for you, if you are sick, and physick to take if you "are sick, and a hospital to go to into the bargain, and if you die "there are boards enough (pointing to a pile of lumber in the yard) "for to make you coffins, and an hundred and fifty acres of land "to bury you in; and if you are not satisfied with all this you may "die and be d—d."—Having finished this eloquent harangue, orator Miller descended from his rostrum, and strutted out of the prison yard, accompanied with hisses from some of the prisoners.

On a re-examination however of the "King's beef," some pieces were found too much tainted for a dog to eat, and the prisoners threw it over the pickets. After this the supply of wholesome meat was such as it ought to be; full good enough for Mr. Miller himself to eat; and some of the very best pieces good enough for Grant, the turnkey.

In all this business of provision for prisoners of war, one thing ought to be taken into consideration, which may be offered as an extenuation of crime alleged against the British agents for prisoners; and that is, that the American soldier and sailor live infinitely better in America than the same class of people do in Great Britain and Ireland. Generally speaking, an American eats three times the quantity of animal food that falls to the share of the same class of people in England, Holland, Germany, Denmark or Sweden. He sleeps more comfortably and lives in greater plenty of fish, flesh, vegetables and spirituous liquors. Add to this, his free-

dom is in a manner unbounded. He speaks his mind to any man. If he thinks he is wronged he seeks redress with confidence; if he is insulted, he resents it; and if you should venture to strike him, he never will rest quiet under the dishonor; yet you seldom or ever hear of quarrels ending in murder. The dagger and pistol are weapons, in a manner unknown. The fist, *à la mode de* John Bull, is commonly the ultimatum of a Yankee's rage.

We often hear the British, if they are unsuccessful, lamenting the war between England and America; they call it an unhappy strife between brethren; and they attribute this "unnatural war" to a French influence; and their friends in New England, who are denominated *Tories,* use the same language; they say that all the odium of the war ought to fall on our administration and their wicked seducers the French; and yet you will find that both in England and at Halifax the French meet with better treatment than their dear brothers the Americans.

We found that there were about two hundred French prisoners in Nova Scotia. Some had been there ever since 1803. Few of them were confined in prison. The chief of them lived in or near the town of Halifax, working for the inhabitants, or teaching dancing, or fencing or their own language. Some were employed as butchers and cooks; others as nurses in the hospital; and they were every where favoured for their complaisance, obedience and good humour. They had the character of behaving better towards the British officers and inhabitants than the Americans, and I believe with reason; for our men seem to take a delight in plaguing, embarrassing and alarming those who were set over them. A Frenchman always tried to please, while many Americans seemed to take an equal delight in letting the Nova Scotians know that they longed to be at liberty to fight them again. I confess I do not wonder that the submissive, smiling Frenchmen made more friends at Halifax, than the ordinary run of American seamen, who seemed too

often to look and speak as if they longed to try again the tug of war with John Bull.

Sunday being a leisure day among the men of business in Halifax and its vicinity, the old *refugees* from the United States used to come round the prison to gratify their eyes, instead of going to a place of worship, with the sight of what they called *"rebels."* These are generally Scotchmen, or sons of Scotchmen, and are very bitter against the Americans. Some of this class were clergymen, who came occasionally to pray and preach with us in prison. We paid every mark of respect to every modest and prudent minister who came among us to perform divine service; but we never could restrain our feelings when one of these refugee gentlemen came among us praying for King George and the royal family of England. The men considered it as an insult, and resented it accordingly. Some of these imprudent men would fulminate the vengeance of Heaven, for what they conceived *political* instead of moral errors. The prisoners respected some of these reverend gentlemen highly, while they despised some others. The priesthood, however, have less hold on the minds of the people of the United States, than of any other people on earth.

The Bishops and Church of England are fast destroying their own craft, by aiding the sly *dissenters* in spreading the Bible through every family in Britain and in America. In reading this blessed book, the people will see how Christianity has been corrupted. They will compare the arch-bishops and dignified clergy of the present degenerate days, with the plainness of our Saviour, and with the simplicity of the holy fisherman and other of his disciples. Before this book the factitious institutions and gorgeous establishments of the modern priesthood will fade and die, like Jonah's gourd. The English Episcopacy never has nor ever will take deep root in the United States. It can never flourish in the American soil. Even the Roman Catholic religion is here a humble and rational thing. Its ministers are highly respected, because

their lives adorn their doctrines; and the parochial care of their flock, who are principally Irish, is seen and commended. It is observed throughout our sea ports that the seafaring people are generous supporters of their ministers; but these same people can never be made to pay tythes, or to hear and support a minister whom they had not directly or remotely chosen. This is the predominant sentiment of all the Anglo-Americans.

The daily allowance of the British government to our prisoners is one pound of bread, one pound of beef, and one gill of peas. Over and above this we received from the American agent a sufficiency of coffee, sugar, potatoes and *tobacco*. The first may be called the bare necessaries of life, but the latter contribute much to its comfortable enjoyment. Whether the British government ought not to have found the whole I am not prepared to determine; but certainly, before this addition from our own agent our men complained bitterly.

In justice to Mr. Miller, the British agent, I ought to record that he paid great attention to the cleanliness of the prison and to the clothes of the men; and I must, at the same time, say that some of our men were very dirty, lazy fellows, that required constantly spurring up to keep them from being offensive. This indolent and careless disposition was observed to be chiefly among those who had been formerly intemperate; they felt the loss of their beloved stimulants, and their spirits sunk, and they had rather lie down and rot, and die, than exert themselves. There were a few who seemed to be like hogs, innately dirty, and who had rather be dirty than clean. Mr. Miller had therefore great merit in compelling these men to follow the rules prescribed to the whole prison. He has the thanks of every considerate American.

It was a common remark that the most indolent and most slovenly men were the most vicious; and a dirty external was a pretty sure indication of a depraved mind. Such as would not con-

form to the rules of cleanliness were committed to the black-hole, which was under the prison, and divided into solitary cells. The agent had the power of confining a prisoner in one of these dungeons during ten days. It is to the credit of our seamen to remark that they co-operated with the agent most heartily in whatever tended to preserve the cleanliness of their persons, and they applauded the confinement of such as were disinclined to follow the salutary rules of the prison.

We were one day not a little shocked by the arrival of a number of American soldiers who were entrapped and taken with Colonel *Boerstler,* in Upper Canada. They exhibited a picture of misery, woe and despair. Their miserable condition called forth our sympathy and compassion, and I may add excited our resentment against the authors of their distress. These unfortunate landsmen had never been used to rough it like sailors, but had lived the easy life of farmers and mechanics. Some of them had never experienced the hardships of a soldier's life, but were raw, inexperienced militia men. They were taken at some creek between Fort George and Little York by the British and their allies the Indians, who stripped them of most of their clothing, and then wore them down by very long and harassing marches; first to Montreal, and then to Quebec; and soon after crowded them on board transports, like negroes in a Guinea ship, where some suffered death and others merely escaped it. It appears from their account and from every other account that the treatment of these poor fellows at their capture, and on their march, and more especially on board the transports from Quebec to Halifax, was barbarous in the extreme, and highly disgraceful to the British name and nation.

We have it asserted uniformly that the prisoners, who came from Quebec to Halifax and to Boston, down the St. Lawrence, were treated and provided for in a manner little above brutes. Colonel Scott, now Major General Scott, came by that route from Quebec to Boston, and it is well known that he complained that there was

neither accommodations, provisions, or any thing on board the ship proper for a gentleman. He spoke of the whole treatment he received with deep disgust and pointed resentment. If an officer of his rank and accomplishments had so much reason for complaint, we may easily conceive what the private soldier must endure.

We paid every attention in our power to these poor soldiers, whose emaciated appearance and dejection gave us reason to expect that an end would soon be put to their sufferings by death. They, however, recruited fast; and we were soon convinced that they were reduced to the condition we saw them in, absolutely for want of food. The account which these soldiers gave of their hardships was enough to fill with rage and resentment the heart of a saint. Four men were not allowed more provision than what was needful for one. They assured us that if they had not secretly come at some bags of ship bread, unknown to the officers of the transport, they must have perished for want of food. We cannot pass over one anecdote. Some fish were caught by our own people on the passage, in common with the crew, but they were compelled to deliver them all to the captain of the ship, who withheld them from the American prisoners. Some of the prisoners had a little money, and the captain of the transport was mean enough to take a dollar for a single codfish, from men in their situation. This fact has appeared in several Boston papers, with the names of the persons concerned, and has never been contradicted or doubted. We give this as the common report; and as the Boston newspapers circulated freely through Nova Scotia and Canada, we infer that had the story been void of truth it would have been contradicted.

Those Americans who have no other knowledge of the English character but what they gather from books made in London and from their dramatic productions, and from their national songs, would believe, as I myself once did, that *John Bull,* (by which name Dean Swift personified the whole nation) was an humane, tenderhearted, generous gentleman; but let him be once in the power of

an Englishman, or what is still worse, of a Scotchman, and it will correct his erroneous notions. An Englishman is strongly attached to his King and country, and thinks nothing on earth can equal them, while he holds all the rest of the world in comparative contempt. Until the days of Bonaparte the people of England really believed that one Englishman could flog six Frenchmen. They at one time had the same idea of us, Americans; but the late war has corrected their articles of belief. The humanity of the British is one of the most monstrous impositions.

The most glaring feature in the English character is a vainglorious ostentation, as is exhibited in their elegant and costly steeples, superb hospitals, useless cathedrals, *lying* columns; such as the monument near London bridge, which as Pope says of it,

"Lifts its tall head and *lies*."

But if you wish to learn their real character, look at their bloody code of laws, read their wars with Wales, with Scotland and with Ireland. Look at India and at their own West India Islands. Look at the present border war carried on by associating themselves with our savages; look into this very prison, ask the soldiers just brought into it what they think of British humanity or British bravery. A reliance on British veracity and honour caused these poor fellows to surrender, when they found them worse than the Indians. These things may be forgiven, but they ought never to be forgotten.

Nova Scotia, or *New Scotland,* was formerly called *Chebucto* by the native Indians. It is a dreary region. The country for many miles west of Halifax is a continued range of mountains, rising one over the other as far as the eye can reach. The winters are severe, and the springs backward. The trees appeared to be as bare on the 26th of May as the same kind of trees do in the middle of March. To us there was something hideous in the aspect of their mountains; but this may have been partly owing to

our own hideous habitation, and low spirits. The same objects may have appeared charming in the eyes of a Scotch family, just arrived from the fag-end of the Island of Great Britain.

The capital, *Halifax,* was settled by a number of British subjects in 1749. It is situated on a spacious and commodious bay or harbor, called Chebucto, of a bold and easy entrance, where a thousand of the largest ships might ride with safety. The town is built on the west side of the harbor and on the declivity of a commanding hill, whose summit is two hundred and thirty-six feet perpendicular from the level of the sea. The town is laid out into oblong squares; the streets parallel and at right angles. The town and suburbs are about two miles in length; and the general width a quarter of a mile. It contained in 1793, about 4,000 inhabitants and 700 houses. At the northern extremity of the town, is the king's naval yard, completely built and supplied with stores of every kind for the royal navy. The harbor of Halifax is reckoned inferior to no place in British America for the seat of government, being open and accessible at all seasons of the year, when almost all other harbors in these provinces are locked up with ice; also from its entrance, situation, and its proximity to the Bay of Fundy and the principal interior settlements of the province. This city lying on the South coast of Nova Scotia has communication with Pictou, 68 miles to the N. E. on the Gulf of St. Lawrence, by a good cart road finished in 1792. It is 12 miles northerly of Cape Sambro, which forms in part the entrance of the bay; 27 south easterly of Windsor, 40 N. by E. of Truro, 80 N. E. by E. of Annapolis, on the Bay of Fundy, and 157 S. E. of St. Ann, in New Brunswick, measuring in a straight line. N. lat. 44 40, W. lon. 63 15.

It was settled chiefly by Scotchmen; and since the Revolutionary war, which secured our independence, they have received considerable additions from the United States of a class of men denominated "refugees," who exiled themselves on account of our republicanism and of their own attachment to the "best of kings." They

show too often their hatred to us. To this day they call us *rebels;* and they speak to us in a stile and tone as if they were sorry they could not murder us without the risk of being hanged.

It is strange, it is passing strange, that a whole people should be so strongly attached to the honor, crown and dignity of their conquerors as the Scotch are to the present royal family of England, whose ancestor was in fact an usurper of the crown and dignities of the Scotch race of kings, the self sufficient Stewarts. The most remarkable thing in the reign of George (beside that of losing America) is the perfect conciliation of the Scotch. Whether this was owing to my Lord Bute, or to his relation, I am unable to say; but it is a singular thing in the history of nations, when we take into consideration the cruel treatment of the Scotch so low down as the year 1745. As there is no new thing under the sun, and what has been may be again, who knows but that the *Cherokees* and *Choctaws,* the *Chippewas,* the *Hurons* and *Pottowattomies* may hereafter become most attached to our government, and afford us Judges, Secretaries of State, Admirals, Generals, Governors of Provinces, Grooms of the Stole and Historians? Who knows but the day will come, when there shall spring up from the mud and ooze of our own trifling lakes, another *Walter Scott,* who shall sing as sublimely to the story of our border wars and who shall be able to trace a long and illustrious line of ancestry, up to the renowned chief *Split-log, Walk-in-the-water, Hanging-maw,* or to *Tecumseh?* Who knows but that among these American Highlanders, we shall find another *Ossian* and another *Fingal?*—for what has been, under similar circumstances, may be again.

Early in the month of July, we were not a little disturbed by the arrival of the crew of our ill omened, ill fated *Chesapeake.*

The capture of this American frigate by the British frigate *Shannon* of equal force, was variously related. From all that I could gather she was not judiciously brought into action, nor well

fought after Captain Lawrence fell. It is too much like the British to hunt up every possible excuse for a defeat; but we must conclude, and I have since found it a general opinion in the United States that the frigate was by no means in a condition to go into action. The captain was a stranger to his own crew; his ship was lumbered up with her cables and every thing else. She ought to have cruised three or four days before she met the *Shannon,* and that, it seems, was the opinion of the captain of the British frigate; who was every way prepared for the action.

The rapid destruction of the British sloop of war *Peacock,* gave Lawrence high reputation; and he felt as if he must act up to his high character. He seemed like an hero impelled, by high ideas of chivalry to fight, conquer or die, without attending to the needful cautions and preparations. His first officer he left sick on shore; his next officer was soon killed; soon after which he fell himself, uttering the never to be forgotten words, "DON'T GIVE UP THE SHIP," which has since become a sort of national motto. While the British captain prudently dressed himself in a short jacket and round hat, so as not to distinguish himself from the other officers, our Capt. Lawrence, who was six feet and four inches tall, was in his uniform and military hat, a fair and inviting mark for the enemy's sharp shooters. No one doubted his bravery, but some have called his prudence in question.

This heroic man and his Lieutenant, Ludlow, were three times buried with great military pomp; first at Halifax—then at Salem, and last of all at New York. The name of Lawrence is consecrated in America, while his ever unlucky ship is doomed to everlasting ignominy; for this was the vessel that preferred allowing the British ship *Leopard* to *muster her crew,* instead of sinking, with her colors flying.

In the month of August, Halifax was alarmed, or pretended to be alarmed, by a rumor that the prisoners on Melville Island, which

is about three miles or less from the town, meditated a sally, with a determination of seizing the capital of Nova Scotia. They immediately took the most serious precautions, and screwed up their municipal regulations to the highest pitch. All the loyal citizens entrusted with arms were ordered to keep themselves in readiness to march at a minute's warning to repel the meditated attack of about a thousand unarmed Yankees, rendered formidable by a reinforcement of a few dozen half-starved soldiers, who were taken by the Indians and British and sent from Quebec down the river St. Lawrence, to the formidable American post on Melville Island, under the command of turn-key Grant!—who was himself under the command of Lieut. General Mr. Agent Miller!

It was reported and believed by many in Halifax that the prisoners had made arrangements for the attack, and had sworn to massacre every man, woman and child. When we found that they really believed the ridiculous story, we must confess that we enjoyed their terror and laughed inwardly at their formidable precautions of defence. They placed a company of artillery, with two pieces of cannon on a height south of the prison; and cleared up a piece of land, and stationed another corps of artillery with a cannon so placed as to rake our habitation lengthwise, while sentries were placed at regulated distances on the road all the way into the town of Halifax. An additional number of troops were stationed on the island, who *bivouacked* in the open air near to the officers' dwellings; in other words, they were placed there to prevent us from cutting the officers' throats with clam shells, or oyster shells, for we had nothing metallic for the purpose.

When we saw these formidable preparations and reflected on our own helpless condition, without any means of offence beside our teeth and nails, we could not but despise our enemies; and we did not omit to increase their ridiculous alarm, by whispering together, pointing our fingers sometimes E. and sometimes W. and sometimes N. and sometimes S. and rubbing our hands and laughing

and affecting to be in high spirits. The conduct of the agent at this threatening crisis of his affairs, did not diminish our contempt of him. He would often mount his rostrum, the head of the staircase, to address us and assure us that we should soon be delivered from our confinement and be sent home. He said that he did not expect to see any of us in prison six weeks longer; and that our detention was then only owing to some delay of orders from Admiral Warren; but that he expected them every moment. He therefore entreated us to remain contented and quiet a little longer, and not obstruct the kind intentions that were in train for our deliverance from captivity; and he assured us, upon his honor, that every thing should be done in his power to expedite our return home; that there were then three cartels getting ready to convey us away. In the mean time every thing was said and done at Halifax to make us satisfied and quiet.

While the agent was making his declarations of friendship, and protesting upon his honor, that we should be sent home, he knew full well that the greatest part of the prisoners were to be sent across the Atlantic, to suffer the punishment of a British prison. The policy of the English government was, it seems, to discourage the enlistment of soldiers into our service by sending the prisoners taken on the frontiers to England. They meant also to distress us by accumulating our seamen in their prisons, and this they imagined would disenable us from manning our men of war, or sending out privateers. They preferred every mode of distressing us to that of fair fighting; for in fair fight and equal numbers, we have always beat them by sea and land.

We were in good humor and high spirits at the prospect of leaving our loathsome den, and once more returning home to see our mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, and school fellows and the old jolly companions of our happy days. We smiled upon Mr. Agent Miller, and he upon us. We greeted our turnkey, the now and then smooth tongued Mr. Grant, with a good morrow, and all

feelings of hostility were fast subsiding; and one told him that he should be very glad to see him in Boston; another said he should be very glad to see him in Marblehead, and another at New York, and Baltimore, and so on.

Towards the close of the month of August, and after Mr. Agent Miller and the military had taken the most effectual method to provide against the possibility of resistance from the prisoners, reports now and then reached us, that the expected change was unhappily broken off, and that it was the fault of the American government. These things were hinted at with great caution, as not entitled to entire credit; the next day it was said that the business of exchange was in a prosperous train. All this was done by way of feeling the pulse of the most respectable of the prisoners; those most likely to take the lead in an insurrection. We could easily trace all these different stories to the cunning Mr. Miller, through his subordinate agents.

On the first day of September, 1813, an hundred of us prisoners were selected from different crews, and ordered to get our baggage ready and be at the gate at a certain hour. On enquiring of our keeper, Mr. Grant, what was the design of this order, he replied, with his habitual duplicity, that we were *"to be sent home."* When Mr. Miller was asked the same question, he replied that he had a particular reason at that time, for not answering the question; but none of us doubted from the selection from different crews, but that we were about to be sent to our beloved country and natal homes. We left the prison with light hearts, not without pitying our companions, who were doomed to wait awhile longer before they could be made so happy as we then felt. We stepped on board the boats with smiling countenances. The barge men told us that the ships we were going to were cartels.

Having arrived among the shipping, the officer of the boat was asked, which of these several ships was the cartel—*"there,"* said he,

pointing to an old 44, *"is the ship which is to take you to old England."* Heavens above! What a stroke of thunder was this! We looked at each other with horror, with dismay, and stupefaction, before our depressed souls recoiled with indignation! Such a change of countenance I never beheld! Had we been on the deck of a ship, and been informed that a match was just about being touched to her magazine of powder, we should not have exhibited such a picture of paleness and dismay. The deception was cruel; the duplicity was infamous. The whole trick from beginning to end was an instance of cowardice, meanness and villainy. It proves that cowards are cruel; that barbarity and sincerity never meet in the same bosom.

We now saw that the rumor of our rising upon our keepers and marching to Halifax was a miserable falsehood, spread abroad for no other purpose than to double our guards, and prevent the imagined consequences of desperation, should it be discovered that we were to be sent across the Atlantic. It is possible we might have succeeded in disarming the soldiers on the island, and taken their cannon; but for want of more arms we could have done but little. Had we all been armed we could have entered Halifax, and put to the test the bravery of these loyalists; but an unarmed multitude are nothing before an eighth part of their number of regular soldiers. Military men in Halifax could never have had a moment's serious apprehension from the prisoners on Melville Island. It is my firm opinion however, that had we been apprized of our cruel destination we should have risen upon the boats and attempted an escape, or sold our lives dearly. Revenge and desperation have done wonders; and both would have steeled the heart and nerved the arm of our little band of sufferers. Had we not been beguiled with the lies of the agent and his turnkey, we should have given our enemies a fresh proof of American bravery, if not of imprudence. Had Miller been on board the boat with us, we should most certainly have thrown him overboard. His base and

dishonorable artifice, first to raise our hopes and expectations to the height of joy and then to sink us in despair, was an infamous deed, worthy such a reward. Speaking for myself, I declare that my heart sunk within me and I came near fainting, and it was some time before tears came to my relief; then in a burst of indignation, I cursed the perfidious enemy, and felt my soul wound up to deeds of desperation.

## CHAPTER II

HAD the agent informed us of the orders of his government, and made us acquainted with our destination, we should have braced our minds up to the occasion, and submitted to our hard fate like men. We should have said to each other in the language of Shakespeare—*"if these things be neces-"sities, let's meet them like necessities";* but to be deceived and duped, and cajoled into a state of great joy and exultation, and then, in an instant precipitated into the dark and cold regions of despair, was barbarous beyond expression. As much resentment as I feel towards Miller and his subalterns, I cannot wish either of them to suffer the pangs I felt at the idea of this floating dungeon.

The late Governor GERRY, in one of his communications to the legislature of Massachusetts, when speaking of the impressment and ill usage of our seamen by the English, calls a British man of war *"a floating Pandemonium."* I never felt the force of that expression until I entered on board this floating hell.

After some difficulty and delay we got ourselves and bedding up the side of the ship; and as our names were called over our bedding was served out to us. We informed the officer that there were but seventy blankets for an hundred men; to which he replied, that he had orders to serve out blankets in the same proportion as they served out our provisions. To understand this, the reader must know that the British have been in the habit, all the war, of giving to their prisoners a less quantity of food than to their own men. They uniformly gave to *six* of us, the same quantity which they gave to *four* of their own sailors. If what they allowed to their own men was barely sufficient, what they gave to us could not be

enough to satisfy the cravings of hunger; and this we all found to be the case.

The crew of the man of war sleep on the deck, which is next under the gun deck, while our destination was on the deck under that. It was to the ship what the cellar is to a house. It was under water, and of course, without windows, or air holes. All the air and light came through the hatchway, a sort of trap door or cellar way. In this floating dungeon we miserable young men spent our first night, in sleepless anguish, embittered with the apprehension of our suffering a cruel death by suffocation. Here the Black Hole of Calcutta rose to my view in all its horrors; and the very thought stopped my respiration, and set my brain on fire. In my distress, I stamped with my feet, and beat my head against the side of the ship in the madness of despair. I measured the misery of those around me by what I myself suffered. Shut up in the dark, with ninety-nine distressed young men, like so many galley slaves or Guinea negroes, excluded from the benefit of the common air, without one ray of light or comfort, and without a single expressive of compassion from any officer of the ship, I never was so near sinking into despair. We naturally cling to life, but now I should have welcomed death. To be confined, and even chained anywhere in the light of the sun, is a distressing thing, especially to very young men, but to be crowded into a dirty hole in the dark, where there was no circulation of air is beyond expression horrible. Perhaps my study of the human frame, and my knowledge of the vital property of the air, and of the philosophy of the vital functions, may have added to my distress. I remembered what I had read and learnt in the course of my education, viz: that every full grown person requires *forty-eight thousand* cubic inches of air in an hour, or *one million one hundred and fifty-two thousand* cubic inches in the course of a day; and that if this is once received into the lungs and breathed out again, it cannot be breathed a second time, till it is mixed with the common atmospheric air. When I

considered that our number amounted to an hundred, I could not drive from my mind this calculation, and the result of it nearly deprived me of my reason. The horrors of the *Black Hole of Calcutta* have been long celebrated, because *Englishmen* suffered and perished in it. Now the English have more than a *thousand* Black Holes into which they unfeelingly thrust their impressed men, and their prisoners of war. Their tenders that lay in the Thames, off Tower-wharf are so many *Black Holes* into which they thrust their own people, whom their press gangs seize in the streets of London, and crowd into them like so many live rabbits or chickens carrying in a cart to market. My reflections on these things have greatly changed my opinion of the English character in point of humanity.

After passing a wretched night, one of the petty officers came down to us, by which event, we learnt that it was morning. I found myself much indisposed; my tongue was dry and coated with a furr; my head ached violently, and I felt no inclination to take any thing but cold water. A degree of calmness, however, prevailed among my fellow prisoners. They found lamentations unavailing, and complaints useless. Few of them, beside myself, had lost their appetites, and several expressed a wish for some breakfast. Preparations were soon made for this delicious repast. The first step was to divide us into messes, six in a mess. To each mess was given a wooden *kid,* or *piggin,* as our farmers call them, because it is out of such wooden vessels that they feed their pigs that are fatting for the market. At 8 o'clock one was called from each mess, by the whistle of the boatswain's mate, to attend at the galley, the nautical name for the kitchen and fire place, to receive the breakfast for the rest. But what was our disappointment to find instead of coffee, which we were allowed by our own government at Melville prison, a piggin of *swill,* for we farmers' sons can give no other name to the disgusting mess they brought us. This breakfast was a pint of liquid which they call *Burgoo,* which is a kind of oatmeal gruel, about the consistence of the swill which our farm-

ers give their hogs, and not a whit better in its quality. It is made of oatmeal, which we Americans very generally detest. Our people consider ground oats as only fit for cattle, and it is never eaten by the human species in the United States. It is said that this oatmeal porridge was introduced to the British prisons by the Scotch influence, and we think that none but hogs and Scotchmen ought to eat it. A mess more repellant to a Yankee's stomach could not well be contrived. It is said, however, that the Highlanders are very fond of it, and that the Scotch physicians extol it as a very wholesome and nutritious food, and very nicely calculated for the sedentary life of a prisoner; but by what we have heard we are led to believe that oatmeal is the staple commodity of Scotland, and that the highly favored Scotch have the exclusive privilege of supplying the miserable creatures whom the fortune of war has thrown into the hands of the English, with this national dish, so delicious to Scotchmen and so abhorrent to an American.

Excepting this pint of oatmeal porridge, we had nothing more to eat or drink until dinner time; when we were served with a pint of *pea water*. Our allowance for the week, for it is difficult to calculate it by the day, was four and a half pounds of bread, two and a quarter pounds of beef or pork, one and a quarter pounds of flour, and the *pea water,* which they called "*soup,*" five days in every week. Now let any man of knowledge and observation judge, whether the portion of food here allotted to each man was sufficient to preserve him from the exquisite tortures of hunger; and perhaps there is no torture more intolerable to young men not yet arrived to their full growth. We had been guilty of no crime. We had been engaged in the service of our dear country, and deserve applause and not torture. And be it forever remembered, that the Americans always feed their prisoners well, and treat them with humanity.

The *Regulus,* for that is the name of the ship we were in, is if I mistake not, an old line of battle ship, armed *en flute,* that is, her

lower deck was fitted up with bunks, or berths, so large as to contain six men in a berth. The only passages for light or air were through the main and fore hatches, which were covered with a grating, at which stood, day and night, a sentinel. The communication between our dungeon and the upper deck was only through the main hatchway, by means of a rope ladder, that could be easily cut away at a moment's warning, should the half starved American prisoners ever conclude to rise and take the ship, which these brave British tars seemed constantly apprehensive of. You may judge of their apprehensions by their extraordinary precautions—they had a large store of muskets in their tops to be ready for their marines and crew should we Yankees drive them from the hull to seek safety above. They had two carronades loaded with grape and canister shot on the poop, pointing forward, with a man at each; and strict orders were given not to hold any conversation with the Americans, under the penalty of the severest chastisement. However improbable the thing may appear, we discussed the matter very seriously and repeatedly among ourselves, and compared the observations we made when on deck, in our council chamber under water. It seems that the British are apprized of the daring spirit of the Americans; they watch them with as much dread as if they were so many tigers.

Just before we sailed our old friend Mr. Miller, came on board, and we were all called upon deck to hear his last speech and receive his blessing. We conceited that he looked ashamed, and felt embarrassed. It is probable that the consciousness of having told us things that were not true disconcerted him. He however, in a milder manner and voice than usual, told us that we were going to England *to be exchanged,* while there were some in another ship going to England *to be hanged.* Beside this enviable difference in our situation, compared with those traitorous Irishmen, who had been fighting against their king and *country,* we were very fortunate in being the first selected to go, as we should of course be the

first to be exchanged and sent home. He told us that he thought it probable that we should be sent home again before spring, or at farthest in the spring; he therefore exhorted us to be good boys during the passage, and behave well and obey orders, and that would insure us kind and humane treatment; but that if we were mutinous, or attempted to resist the authority of the officers, our treatment would be less kind, and we should lose our turn in the course of exchange, and that our comfort and happiness depended entirely on our own submissive behavior. He every now and then gave force to his assertions by pledging *his honor* that what he said was true, and no deception.

As this was probably the last time we should have an opportunity of a personal communication with Mr. Agent Miller, we represented to him that there were several of the prisoners destitute of comfortable clothing; that the clothes of some were not even decent to cover those parts of the body that even our savage Indians conceal, and he promised to accommodate them; but we never heard any more of him or the clothing. However it may be accounted for, we saw this man part from us with regret. It seemed to be losing an old acquaintance, while we were going we knew not where—to meet we knew not what.

Previous to our sailing we had applied to Mr. Mitchell, the American agent, for a supply of clothing; but from some cause or other he did not relieve the wants of our suffering companions. Mr. Mitchell may be a very good man; but every good man is not fit for every station. We had rather see old age or decrepitude pensioned by the government we support, than employed in stations that require high health and activity. Disease and infirmity may check or impede the benevolent views of our government, and cast an odium on the officers of administration. After all, we may find fault where we ought to praise. It is possible that we may not have made due allowance for Mr. Miller, the British agent, and we may have sometimes denounced him in terms of bitterness, when he

did not deserve it. His general conduct, however, we could not mistake.

On the third of September, 1813, we sailed from Halifax in company with the *Melpomene,* a man of war transport, armed *en flute.* On board of this ship were a number of Irishmen who had enlisted in our regiments, and were captured in Upper Canada, fighting under the colors of the United States of America; or in the language of the English government, found fighting against their king and *country.* The condition of these Irishmen was truly pitiable. Unable to live in their own oppressed country, they, in imitation of our forefathers, left their native land to enjoy liberty, and the fruits of their labor in another. They abandoned Ireland, where they were oppressed, and chose this country, where they were protected and kindly treated. Many of them had married in America, and considered it their home. Here they chose to live, and here they wished to die. As few of them had trades, they got their living as laborers or as seamen. The embargoes and the war threw them out of business, and many of them enlisted in our army; that is, in the army of the country which they had chosen, and had a right to choose. Neither our nor their consciences forbade them to fight for us, against the English and their allies the Indians. In their eyes, and in the eye of our laws, no imputation of crime could be attached to their conduct; yet were these men seized from among other prisoners taken in battle, and sent together in one ship, as traitors and rebels to *their country.* We fled from our native land, said these unfortunate men, to avoid the tyranny and oppression of our British task-makers, and the same tyrannical hand has seized us here and sent us back to be tried, and perhaps executed as rebels. Beside the privations, hunger and miseries that we endured, these poor Irishmen had before their eyes, the apprehension of a violent and ignominious death. While we talked among ourselves of the hard fate of these brave Hibernians, we were ashamed to lament our own.

I cannot help remarking here, that the plan of retaliation determined by President Madison, merits the respect and gratitude of the present and future generations of men. It was this energetic step that saved the lives, and insured the usual treatment of ordinary prisoners of war to these American soldiers of Irish birth. This firm determination of the American executive arrested the bloody hand of the British. They remembered *Major André,* and they recollected Sir *James Asgill,* under the administration of the great WASHINGTON, and they trembled for the fate of their own officers. May eternal blessings here and hereafter be the reward of MADISON, for his righteous intention to retaliate on the enemy any public punishment that should be executed on these American soldiers, of Irish origin. While we feel gratitude and respect to the head of the nation for his scheme of retaliation, we cannot suppress our feelings of disgust towards the faction in our own country who justified the British government in their conduct towards these few Irishmen, and condemned our own for protecting them from an ignominious death. I speak it with shame for my country, the ablest writers of the oppositionists, and the oldest and most celebrated ministers of religion, employed their pens and their voices to condemn Mr. Madison and to justify the British doctrine. This is a deep stain on the character of our clergy; and the subsequent conduct of the British may serve to shew these ever meddling men, that our enemies despised them and respected Madison.

Our voyage across the Atlantic afforded but few incidents for remark. Every day brought the same distressed sensations, and every night the same doleful feelings, arising from darkness, stench, increased debility and disease. The general and most distressing in the catalogue of our miseries, was the almost unceasing torment of hunger. Many of us would have gladly partaken with our father's hogs, in their hog-troughs. This barbarous system of starvation reduced several of our hale and hearty young men to mere skeletons. What with the allowance of the enemy and the

allowance from our own government, in which was good hot coffee for breakfast, we were generally robust and hearty at Melville Island. Some of our companions might well be called fine-looking fellows, when we came first on board the *Regulus,* but before we arrived on the coast of England they were so reduced and weakened, that they tottered as they walked. It was the opinion of us all that one young man absolutely died for want of sufficient food! Yes! Christian reader, a young American, who was carried on board the *Regulus,* man of war transport, perished for want of sufficient to eat. In this insufficiency of food, complaint was made to the Captain of the *Regulus,* but it produced no increase of the scanty allowance; and had the common sailors possessed no more humanity than their officers, we might all have perished with hunger. You who never felt the agonizing torture of hunger, can have no idea of our misery. The study of my profession had acquainted me, that when the stomach is empty and contracted to a certain degree, that it, in a measure, acts upon itself, and draws all the neighbouring organs into sympathy with its distress: this increases to an agony that ends in distraction; for it is well known that those who are starved to death die raving distracted! Some of us in the course of this horrid voyage could have eaten a puppy or kitten could we have laid hands upon either.

Our constitutions, mind and body united, were so constantly impressed and worried with the desire of eating, that the torment followed us in our sleep. We were constantly dreaming of tables finely spread with a plenty of all those good and savouring things with which we used to be regaled at home, when we would wake smacking our lips, and groaning with disappointment. I pretend not to say, that the allowance was sufficient to keep some men pretty comfortable, but it was not half enough for some others. It is well known in common life that one man will eat three times as much as another. The quality of the bread served out to us on board the *Regulus,* was not fit and proper for any human being. It was old,

and more like the powder of rotten wood than bread-stuff, and to crown all, it was full of worms. Often have I seen our poor fellows viewing their daily allowance of bread with mixed sensations of pain and pleasure, with smiles and tears, not being able to determine whether they had best eat it all up at once, or to eat it in small portions through the day. Some would devour all their bread at once, worms and all, while others would be eating small portions through the day. Some picked out the worms, and threw them away, others eat them, saying that they might as well eat the worm as his habitation. Some reasoned and debated a long time on the subject. Prejudice said, throw the nasty thing away, while gnawing hunger held his hand. Birds, said they, are nourished by eating worms, and if clean birds eat them why may not man? Who feels any reluctance at eating of an oyster, with all its parts, and why not a worm?

One day while we were debating the subject, one of our jack tars set us a laughing, by crying out—"*Retaliation by G—, these d—d worms eat us when we are dead, and so we will eat them first.*" This shews that misery can sometimes laugh. I have observed that a sailor has generally more laughter and good humour in him than is to be found among any other class of men. They have beside a greater share of compassion than the soldier. We had repeated instances of their generosity; for while the epauletted officers of this British ship treated us like brutes, the common sailors would, now and then, give us of their own allowance; but they took care not to let their officers know it.

The *Regulus* had brought British soldiers to America, and among the rags and filth left behind them were myriads of fleas. These were at first a source of vexation, but at length their destruction became an amusement. We could not, however, overcome them; like the persecuted Christians of old times when you killed one, twenty would seem to rise up in his place. Had I have known what I have since learnt, and had been provided with the essential

oil of pennyroyal, we should have conquered all these light troops in a few days. A few drops of this essential oil, dropped here and there upon the blankets infested with fleas, and they will abandon the garment. The effluvium of it destroys them.

Confined below, we knew little of what was going on upon deck; some of us, however, were more or less there every day. Nothing occurred worthy notice during our passage to England, excepting the retaking of a brig captured a few hours before on the Grand Bank by the frigate *President,* Commodore Rodgers. From information obtained from the midshipman who commanded the prize, we learnt the course of the *President,* whereupon we altered ours to avoid being captured. A few hours after this, we fell in with the *Bellerophon,* a British seventy-four, who went, from our information, in pursuit of the *President.* We could easily perceive that the fame of our frigates had inspired these masters of the ocean with a degree of respect bordering on dread. We overheard the sailors say, that they had rather fall in with two French frigates than one American. We thought, or it might be conceit, that we were spoken to with more kindness at this time. I have certainly had occasion for remarking, that prosperity increases the insults and hard heartedness of the British, and that we never received so much humane attention as when they apprehended an attack from us, as in the case of alarm at Halifax. I was brought up, all my life, even until I left my father's house and came off without calculation or reflection on this wild adventure in a privateer, in the opinion that the English were an humane, generous and magnanimous people, and that none but Turks, Frenchmen and Algerines were cruel; but my experience for three years past has corrected my false notions of this proud nation. If they do not impale men as the Algerines and Turks do, or roast a man as the Indians do, and as the Inquisitors do, they will leave him to starve, and linger out his miserable days in the hole of a ship, or in a prison where the blessed air is changed into a poison, and where the articles given

him to eat are far worse in quality than the swill with which the American farmer feeds his hogs. How can an officer, how can any man, holding in society the rank of a gentleman, sit down to his meal in his cabin, when he has a hundred of his fellow creatures, some of them brought up with delicacy and refinement, and with the feelings of gentlemen—I say, how can he sit composedly down to his dinner, while men, as good as himself, are suffering for want of food? There is in this conduct either a cold blooded cruelty, or a stupidity and want of reflection, that does no honour to that officer, or to those who gave him his command.

It happened, when some of us were allowed, in our turn to be on deck, that we would lay hold and pull or belay a rope when needed. When we arrived at Portsmouth, which was the fifth of October, we were visited by the health officer; and when we again weighed anchor to go to the quarantine ground, the boatswain's mate came to tell us, that it was the captain's order, that we should tumble up, and assist at the capstan. Accordingly three or four went to assist; but one of our veteran tars bid him to go and tell his captain, that hunger and labour were not friends, and never would go together; and that from prisoners who subsisted three days in a week on *pea-water,* could only give him pea-water assistance. This speech raised the temper of the officer of the deck, who sent down some marines, who drove us all up. There was among us a Dutchman, who was very forward in complying with the officer's request; but being awkward and careless withal, he suffered himself to be jambed between the end of the capstan-bar and the side of the ship, which hurt him badly. Some of the prisoners collected round their wounded companion, when the officer of the deck ordered them to take the d—d blunder-headed fellow below, and let some American take his place; but after this expression of brutality towards the poor jambed up Dutchman, not a man would go near the capstan, so one of their own crew filled up the vacancy made by the wounded Hollander.

A Mr. S——, who had some office of distinction in Newfoundland, if I mistake not he was the first in command of that dreary island. This gentleman, who I think they called General Smith, was a passenger on board the *Regulus;* one day, when I was upon deck, he asked me how many of the hundred prisoners could read and write. I told him that it was a rare thing to find a person, male or female, in New England, who could not write as well as read. Then, said he, New England must be covered with charity schools. I replied, that we had no charity schools, or very few; at which he looked as if he thought I had uttered an absurdity. I then related in a few words our school system. I told him that the primary condition of every town in Massachusetts, and I believed in the other four New England States, was a reserve of land, and a bond to maintain a school or schools, according to the number of inhabitants; that the teachers were supported by a tax, in the same way as we supported our clergy; that such schools were opened to every child, from the children of the first magistrate down to the children of the constable; and that there was no distinction promotion or favour, but what arose from talent, industry and good behaviour. I told him that the children of the poorest people generally went to school in the winter, while in the spring and summer they assisted their parents.

He walked about musing awhile, and then turning back, asked me if the clergy did not devote much of their time to the instruction of our youth—very seldom, sir—our young students of divinity and theological candidates very often instruct youth; but when a gentleman is once ordained and settled as a parish minister, he never or very rarely keeps a school. At which the general appeared surprised. I added that sometimes Episcopal clergymen kept a school, but never the Presbyterian, or Congregational ministers. He asked why the latter could not keep school as well as the former; I told him, because they were expected to write their own sermons, at which he laughed. Besides parochial visits consume much of

their time, and when a congregation have stipulated with a minister to fill the pulpit, and preach two sermons a week, visit the sick and attend funerals they think he can have no time to write sermons; they moreover consider it derogatory to the honour of his flock to be obliged to keep a school—when I told him that our clergymen bent all their force to instructing youth in morality and religion, he said, then they attempt to raise a structure before they lay a foundation for it. He seemed very strenuous that our priests should be employed in the education of youth, as he conceived that hired school masters had not the pious zeal that the priest would have. I suspect, said General S. that your priests are too proud and too lazy. I perceived his idea was that a school master, hired to undergo the drudgery of teaching boys, was too much of an hireling to fill up to the full the important duties of a teacher; but he judged of them by the numerous Scotch school masters here and there in Canada, Nova Scotia, the West India Islands and every where, teaching for money merely. He did not know that our New England schoolmasters were men of character and consequence. Some of our very first men in the United States have been teachers of youth. At this present time some of the sons of the first men in Massachusetts are village schoolmasters; that is, they keep a school in the winter vacations of the University; some of them for the first year after leaving college.

I was much pleased with the general; and have since learnt, that he was a very worthy and benevolent man; and that he had paid great attention to the education of youth in Newfoundland; and that it was, in a degree, his ruling passion. I wish I had then known as much of our school system and of our system of public education at our Universities, as I do now; for I might have gratified his benevolent disposition by the recital. The ignorance of English gentlemen of the people of America is indeed surprising as well as mortifying. By their treatment of us it is evident they consider us a sort of white savages, with minds as uncultivated and

dispositions as ferocious as their own allies, with their tomahawks and scalping knives. After conversing with this worthy Englishman about the education of the common people in America, I could not but say to myself, little do you, good sir, and your haughty, unfeeling captain imagine that there are those among the hundred miserable men whom you keep confined in the hold of your ship like so many Gallipago turtles, and who you allow to suffer for want of sufficient food; little do you think that there are among them those who have sufficient learning to lay the whole story of their sufferings before the American and English people; little do you imagine that the inhuman treatment of men every way as good as yourselves, is now recording, and will in due time be displayed to your mortification.

Our sailors, though half starved, confined and broken down by harsh treatment, always kept up the genuine Yankee character, which is that of being grateful and tractable by kind usage, but stern, inflexible and resentful at harsh treatment. One morning as the general and the captain of the *Regulus* were walking as usual on the quarter deck, one of our Yankee boys passed along the galley with his kid of burgoo. He rested on the edge of the hatchway, while he was adjusting the rope ladder to descend with his swill. The thing attracted the attention of the general, who asked the man, how many of his comrades eat of that quantity for their breakfast? *"Six, Sir,"* said the man, *"but it is fit food only for hogs."* This answer affronted the captain, who asked the man, in an angry tone, *"what part of America he came from?"* "Near to Bunker Hill, Sir—*if you ever heard of that place.*" They looked at each other and smiled, turned about and continued their walk. This is what the English call impudence. Give it what name you please, it is that something which will one day wrest the trident from the hands of Britannia and place it with those who have more humanity, if not more cultivated powers of mind. There was a marine in the *Regulus,* who had been wounded on board the *Shan-*

*non* in the battle with the Chesapeake, who had a great antipathy to the Americans, and was continually casting reflections on the Americans generally. He one day got into a high dispute with one of our men, which ended in blows. This man had served on board the *Constitution,* when she captured the *Guerrière* and afterwards the *Java.* After the two wranglers were separated, the marine complained to his officer, that he had been abused by one of the American prisoners, and it reaching the captain's ears, he ordered the American on the quarter deck, and inquired into the cause of the quarrel. When he had heard it all, he called the American sailor a d—d *coward* for striking a wounded man. "I am no coward, Sir," said the high spirited Yankee; "I was captain of a gun on board the *Constitution* when she captured the *Guerrière,* and afterwards when she took the *Java.* Had I been a coward I should not have been there." The captain called him an insolent *scoundrel,* and ordered him to his hole again. What the British naval commanders call insolence, is no more than the undaunted expression of their natural and habitual independence. When a British sailor is called by his captain, in an angry tone, on to the quarter deck, he turns pale and trembles, like a thief before a country justice; but not so the American; he, if he be innocent, speaks his mind with a firm tone and steady countenance; and if he feels himself insulted, he is not afraid to deal in sarcasm. In the instances just mentioned, *Jonathan* knew full well that the very name of Bunker Hill, the *Guerrière* and the *Java,* was a deep mortification to John Bull. Actuated by this sort of feeling, the steady Romans shook the world.

From this digression, let us return, and resume our Journal. We arrived off Portsmouth the fifth of October, 1813; and were visited by the health officer and ordered to the Mother-bank, opposite that place, where vessels ride out their quarantine. The next day the ship was fumigated, and every exertion made by the officers to put her in a condition for inspection by the health-officer.

Letters were fumigated by vinegar, or nitrous acid, before they were allowed to go out of the ship. Their attention was next turned to us miserable prisoners. We were ordered to wash and put on clean shirts. Being informed that many of us had not a second shirt to put on, the captain took down the names of such destitute men, but never supplied them with a single rag.

The prisoners were now as anxious to go on shore, and to know the extent of their misery, as the captain of the *Regulus* was to get rid of us. The most of us, therefore, joined heartily in the task of cleansing the ship and in white-washing the lower deck, or the place we occupied. Some, either through laziness or resentment, refused to do any thing about; but the rest of us said that it was always customary in America, when we left a house, or a room we hired, to leave it clean, and it was ever deemed disreputable to leave an apartment dirty. The officers of the ship tried to make them, and began to threaten them, but they persisted in their refusal and every attempt to force them was fruitless. I do not myself wonder that the British officers, so used to prompt and even servile obedience of their own men, were ready to knock some of our obstinate saucy fellows on the head. This brings to my mind the concise but just observation of an English traveller through the United States of America. After saying that the inhabitants south of the Hudson were a mixed race of English, Irish, Scotch, Dutch, Germans and Swedes, among whom you could observe no precise national character; he adds, "but as to New-England, they are all true English, and there you see one uniform trait of national manners, habits and disposition. The people are hardy, industrious, humane, obliging, obstinate and brave. By kind and courteous usage, mixed with flattery, you can lead them like so many children almost as you please;" *but,* he adds, *"the Devil from h—l, with fire in one hand, and fagots in the other, cannot drive them."* Neither Cæsar nor Tacitus ever drew a more true and concise character of the Gauls or Germans than this. Here is seen the trans-

planted Englishman, enjoying "Indian freedom," and therefore a little wilder than in his native soil of Albion; and yet it is surprising that a people whose ancestors left England less than a century and a half ago should be so little known to the present court and administration of Great Britain. Even the revolutionary war was not sufficient to teach John Bull that his descendants had improved by transplantation, in all those qualities for which stuffy John most values himself. The present race of Englishmen are puffed up and blinded by what they *have been,* while their descendants in America are proud of what they are, and what they know they *shall be.*

After the ship had been cleansed, fumigated and partially whitewashed, so as to be fit for the eye and nose of the health officer, she was examined by him, and *reported free from contagion!* Now I conceive this line of conduct not very reputable to the parties concerned. When we arrived off Portsmouth our ship was filthy, and I believe contagious; we miserable prisoners, were encrusted with the nastiness common to such a place, as that into which we had been inhumanly crowded. It was the duty of the health officers and the surgeon of the *Regulus,* to have reported her condition when she first anchored, and not have cleaned her up and altered her condition for inspection. In the American service the captain, surgeon and health officer would have all been cashiered for such a dereliction of honor and duty. This is the way that the British board of Admiralty, the transport board, the parliament and the people are deceived; and this corruption, which more or less pervades the whole transport service, will enervate and debase their boasted navy. We cannot suppose that the British board of Admiralty or the transport board would justify the cruel system of starvation practised on the brave Americans who were taken in Canada and conveyed in their floating dungeons down the river St. Lawrence to Halifax. Some of these captains of transports deserve to be hanged for their barbarity to our men, and for the eternal hatred

they have occasioned towards their own government in the hearts of the surviving Americans. We hope, for the honor of that country whence we derived our laws and sacred institutions, that this Journal will be read in England.

The *Regulus* was then removed to the anchoring place destined for men of war; and the same night, we were taken out, and put on board the *Malabar* storeship, where we found one hundred and fifty of our countrymen in her hold, with no other bed to sleep on but the stone ballast. Here were two hundred and fifty men, emaciated by a system of starvation, cooped up in a small space with only an aperture of about two feet square to admit the air, and with ballast stones for our beds! Although in the harbor, we were not supplied with sufficient water to quench our thirst, nor with sufficient light to see our food or each other, nor sufficient air to breathe; and what aggravated the whole was the stench of the place, owing to a diarrhœa with which several were affected. Our situation was truly deplorable. Imagine to yourself, Christian reader! *two hundred and fifty* men crammed into a place too small to contain one hundred with comfort, stifling for want of air, pushing and crowding each other, and exerting all their little remaining strength to push forward to the grated hatchway to respire a little fresh air. The strongest obtained their wish, while the weakest were pushed back and sometimes trampled under foot. God of mercy cried I, in my agony of distress, is this a sample of the English humanity we have heard and read so much of from our school boy years to manhood? If they are a merciful nation, they belong to that class of nations "whose tender mercies are cruelty."

Representations were repeatedly made to the captain of the *Malabar,* of our distressed situation, as suffering extremely by heat and stagnant air; for only two of us were allowed to come upon deck at a time; but he answered that he had given orders for our safe treatment, and safe keeping; and he was determined not to lose his ship by too much lenity. In a word, we found the fellow's

heart to be as hard as the bed we slept on. Soon after, however, our situation became so dangerous and alarming, that one of the marine corps informed the captain that if he wished to preserve us alive, he must speedily give us more air. If this did not move his compassion, it alarmed his fears; and he then gave orders to remove the after hatch and iron bars (be) fixed in its place, in order to prevent us from forcing our way up and throwing him into the sea, a punishment he richly deserved. This alteration rendered the condition of our *Black Hole,* more tolerable; and it was nevertheless a very loathsome dungeon: for our poor fellows were not allowed to go upon deck to relieve the calls of nature, but were compelled to appropriate one part of our residence to this dirty purpose. This, as may be supposed, rendered our confinement doubly disgusting, as well as unwholesome.

I do not recollect the name of the captain of the *Malabar,* and it may be well that I do not; I only know that he was a Scotchman. It may be considered by some as illiberal to deal in national reflections, I nevertheless cannot help remarking that I have received more ill-treatment from men of that nation than from individuals of any other; and this is the general impression of my countrymen. The poet tells us, that

> "Cowards are cruel, but the brave
> Love mercy, and delight to save."

The Scotch are brave soldiers, but we Americans have found them to be the most hard-hearted and cruel people we have ever yet met with. Our soldiers as well as sailors make the same complaint, insomuch that *"cruel as a Scotchman,"* has become a proverb in the United States. The Scotch officers have been remarked for treating our officers, when in their power, with insolence and expressions of contempt; more so than the English. It is said that a Scotch officer that superintends the horrid whippings so common in British camps is commonly observed to be more hard hearted than an English one. It is certain that they are generally preferred as negro-

drivers in the West India Islands. It has been uniformly remarked that those Scotchmen who are settled on the Canada frontiers were remarkable for their bitterness towards our men in captivity.

We speak here of the vagrant Scotch, the fortune-hunters of the Caledonian tribe, at the same time we respect her philosophers and literary men, who appear to us to compose the first rank of writers. Without mentioning their Ossian, Thomson and Burns, we may enumerate their prose writers, such as Hume, and the present association of truly learned and acute men, who write the *Edinburgh Review*. A Scotchman may be allowed to show pride at the mention of this celebrated work. As it regards America, this northern constellation of talent shines brightly in our eyes. The ancient Greeks, who once straggled about Rome and the Roman empire, were not fair specimens of the refined Athenians.

Our peasantry, settled around our own frontier and around the shores of our lakes, have a notion that the Scotch Highlanders were not long since the same kind of wild, half naked people compared with the true English, that the *Choctaws, Cherokees, Pottowatomies* and *Kickapoo Indians* are to the common inhabitants of these United States; that less than an hundred years ago, these Scotchmen were in the habit of making the like scalping and tomahawking excursions upon the English farmer that the North American savage makes upon the white people here. This is the idea which our common people have of what Walter Scott calls "*the border wars*" Some of them will tell you that the Scotch go half-naked in their own country, and wear a blanket and kill their enemies with a knife, just like Indians. They say their features differ from the English as much as theirs do from the Indian. In a word, to suppose the Scotch Highlanders to be a race who have been conquered by the English, who have taught them the use of fire arms and civilized them in a degree to form themselves into regiments of soldiers, and this imperfect idea of the half savage *Sawney* will not soon be corrected; and we must say that the general conduct of this harsh and

self-interested race towards our prisoners will not expedite the period of correct ideas relative to the comparative condition of the Scotch and English. The Americans have imbibed no prejudice against the Irish, having found them a brave, generous, jovial set of fellows, full of fun and full of good kind feelings, the very antipodes of Scotchmen, who, as it regards those qualities, are cold, rough and barren, like the land that gave them birth.

We moved from Portsmouth to the *Nore* or Noah, for I know not the meaning of the word or how to spell it. The place so called is the mouth of the river Thames, which runs through the capital of the British nation. We were three days on our passage. Here we were transferred to several tenders, to be transportd to Chatham. We soon entered the river Medway, which rises in Sussex and passes by Tunbridge, Maidstone and Rochester, in Kent, and is then divided into two branches called the east and west passage. The chief entrance is the west, and is defended by a considerable fort, called Sheerness. In this river lay a number of Russian men of war, detained here probably by way of pledge for the fidelity of the Emperor. What gives most celebrity to this river is *Chatham,* a naval station where the English build and lay up their first rate men of war. It is but about thirty miles from London, or the distance of Newport, Rhode Island, from the town of Providence. We passed up to where the prison ships lay after dark. The prospect appeared very pleasant, as the prison ships appeared to us illuminated. As we were all upon deck we enjoyed the sight as we passed, and the commander of the tender appeared to partake of our pleasure. We were ordered on board the *Crown Prince* prison ship; and as our names were called over we were marched along the deck between two rows of emaciated Frenchmen, who had drawn themselves up to review us. We then passed on to that part of the ship which was occupied by the Americans, who testified their curiosity at knowing all about us, and sticking to their national characteristic, put more questions to us in ten minutes than we could well

answer in as many hours. We passed the evening and the first part of the night in mutual communications; and we went to rest with more pleasure than for many a night before.

Our prison ship was moored in what they called Gillingham *reach.* We would here remark that the rivers Thames and Medway make, like all other rivers near to their outlets, many turnings or bendings; some forming a more obtuse and some a more acute angle with their banks. This course of the river compels a vessel to *stretch* along in one direction, and then to *stretch* along in a very different direction. What the English call *reaching,* we in America call *stretching.* Each of these different courses of the river they call *"reaches."* They have their *long reach* and their *short reach,* and a number of reaches, under local or less obvious names. Some are named after some of their own pirates, which is here and there designated by a gibbet; a singular object, be sure, to greet the eye of a stranger on entering the grand watery avenue of the capital of the British empire. But there is no room for disputing concerning our tastes. The reach where our prison was moored was about three miles below Chatham, and is named from the village of Gillingham. Now whether *reach* or *stretch* be the most proper for an effort to sail against the wind, is left to be settled by those reverend monopolizers of all the arts and sciences, the London Reviewers; who by the way, and we mention it *pro bono publico,* would very much increase their stock of knowledge and usefulness if they would depute a few missionaries to pass and repass the Atlantic in a British transport, containing in its *Black Hole* a hundred or two of Yankee prisoners of war. It would, if they should be so fortunate as to survive the voyage, make them better judges of the character of the English nation and of the American nation, and of that nearly lost tribe, the Caledonian nation.

There were thirteen prison ships beside our own, all ships of the line, and one hospital ship, moored near each other. They were filled principally with Frenchmen, Danes and Italians. We found

on our arrival *twelve hundred* Americans, chiefly men who had been *impressed* on board British men of war, and who had given themselves up with a declaration that they would not fight against their own countrymen, and they were sent here and confined, without any distinction made between them and those who had been taken in arms. The injustice of the thing is glaring. During the night the prisoners were confined on the lower deck and on the main deck; but in the day time they were allowed the privilege of the "pound," so called, and the forecastle; which was a comfortable arrangement compared with the *black holes* of the *Regulus* and *Malabar*. There were three officers on board our ship, namely a lieutenant, a sailing master and a surgeon, together with sixty marines and a few invalid or superannuated seamen to go in the beats. The whole was under the command of a Commodore, while Captain Hutchinson, agent for the prisoners of war, exercised a sort of controul over the whole; but the butts and bounds of their jurisdiction I never knew. The Commodore visited each of the prison ships every month, to hear and redress complaints and to correct abuses, and to enforce wholesome regulations. All written communications, and all intercourse by letter passed through the hands of Capt. Hutchinson. If the letters contained nothing of evil tendency they were suffered to pass; but if they contained anything which the agent deemed improper, they were detained. Complaints were sometimes made when those who wrote them thought they ought not.

We found our situation materially altered for the better. Our allowance of food was more consonant to humanity than at Halifax, much more to the villainous scheme of starvation on board the *Regulus*, and the still more execrable *Malabar*. Our allowance of food here was half a pound of beef and a gill of barley, one pound and a half of bread, for five days in the week, and one pound of cod-fish and one pound of potatoes, or one pound of smoked herring the other two days; and porter and small beer were allowed to be sold to us. Boats with garden vegetables visited the ship

daily, so that we now lived in clover compared with our former hard fare and cruel treatment. Upon the whole I believe that we fared as well as could be expected, all things considered, and had such fare as we could do very well with; not that we fared so well as the British prisoners fare in America. Rich as the English nation is, it cannot well afford to feed us as we feed the British prisoners; such is the difference of the two countries in point of cheap food. On Thanksgiving Day, and on Christmas Day, and such like holy days, we used to treat these Europeans with geese, turkeys and plum pudding. Many of these fellows declared that they never in their lives sat down to a table of a roasted turkey, or even a roasted goose. It is also a fact that when the time approached for drafting the British prisoners to send to Halifax to exchange them for our own men, several of the *patriotic* Englishmen, and many Irishmen, ran away, and when taken showed as much chagrin as our men would have felt had they attempted to desert and run home from Halifax prison and had been seized and brought back! This is a curious fact, and worthy the attention of the British politician. *An American, in England, pines to get home; while an Englishman and an Irishman longs to become an American citizen.* Ye wise men of England, the far famed England, the proud island whence we originally sprang, ponder well this fact; and confess that it will finally operate a great change in our respective countries and that your thousand ships, your vast commerce, and your immense (factitious) riches cannot alter it. This inclination, or disposition, growing up in the hearts of that class of your subjects who are more disposed to follow the bent of their natural appetites than to cultivate patriotic opinions, will one day hoist our "bits of striped bunting" over those of your now predominant flag, and you, long-sighted politicians, see it as well as I do. The hard fare of your sailors and soldiers, the scoundrelism of some of your officers, especially those concerned in your provision departments; but above all your *shocking cruel punishments* in your navy and in your *army,* have lessened their attachment to

their native country. England has, from the beginning, blundered most wretchedly for want of consulting the human heart in preference to musty parchments; and the equally useless books on the law of nations. Believe me, ye great men of England, Scotland, Ireland and Berwick upon Tweed! that one chapter from the *Law of Human Nature,* is worth more than all your libraries on the *law of nations.* Beside, gentlemen, your situation is a new one. No nation was ever so situated and circumstanced as you are with regard to us, your descendants. The history of nations does not record its parallel. Why then have recourse to books, or maritime laws or written precedents? In the code of the law of nations, you stand in need of an entirely *New Chapter.* We Americans, we despised Americans, are accumulating, as fast as we well can, the materials for that chapter. Your government began to write this chapter in blood, and for two years past we co-operated with you in the same way. Nothing stands still within the great frame of Nature. On every sublunary thing mutability is written. Nothing can arrest the destined course of republics and kingdoms:

"Westward the course of empire takes its way."

It is singular that while the Englishman and Irishman are disposed to abandon their native countries to dwell with us in this new world, the Scotchman has rarely shown that inclination. No—Sawney is loyal, and talks as big of his king and his *country,* as would an English country squire surrounded by his tenants, his horses, and his dogs. It is singular that the Laplander and the inhabitant of Iceland are as much attached to their frightful countries, as the inhabitant of Italy, France or England; and when avarice and the thirst for a domineering command leads the Scotchman out of his native rocks and barren hills and treeless country, he talks of it as a second paradise, and as the ancient Egyptians [1] longed after their onions and garlic, so these half dressed, rawboned mountaineers talk in raptures of their country, of their bagpipes, their singed sheep's head and their "haggis." The only way

[1] Dr. Waterhouse makes a slip here: it was the Hebrews.—Numbers, xi:5.

that I can think of, by way of preventing the heart's blood of Old England from being drained off in America, is to people Nova Scotia and Newfoundland with Scotchmen, where they can raise a few sheep for singeing and for *haggis;* and where they can wear their Gothic habit and be indulged in the luxury of the bagpipe, enjoy over again their native fogs and howling storms, and think themselves at home. Nature seems to have fixed the great articles of food in Nova Scotia to fish and potatoes; this last article is of excellent quality in that country. Then let these strangers, these *hostes,* these antipodes to the Americans, man the British fleet and fill up the ranks of their armies, and mutual antipathy will prevent the dreaded coalition.

But I hasten to return from these people to my prison ship. Among other conveniences, we had a sort of a shed erected over the hatchway, on which to air our hammocks. This was grateful to us all, especially to those whose learning had taught them the salutiferous effects of a free circulation of the vital air. It is surprising, that after what the English philosophers have written concerning the properties of the atmospheric air; after what Boyle, Mayhew, Hales and Priestley have written on this subject; and after what they have learnt from the history of the Calcutta Black Hole; and after what Howard has taught them concerning prisons and hospitals, it is surprising that in 1813, the commanders of ships in the English service should be allowed to thrust a crowd of men into those hideous *Black Holes,* situated in the bottom of their ships, far below the surface of the water. I have sometimes pleased myself with the hope that what is here written may contribute to the abolition of a practice so disgraceful to a nation; a nation which has the honor of first teaching mankind the true properties of the air and of the philosophy of the healthy construction of prisons and hospitals; and one would suppose, of healthy and convenient ships for the prisoner as well as for their own seamen.

Our situation in the day time was not unpleasant for prisoners

of war. Confinement is disagreeable to all men, and very irksome to us Yankees, who have rioted, as it were from our infancy, in a sort of Indian freedom. Our situation was the most unpleasant during the night. It was the practice every night at sun-set to count the prisoners as they went down below, and then the hatchways are all barred down and locked and the ladder of communication drawn up; and every other precaution that fear inspires adopted to prevent our escape, or our rising upon our prison keepers; for they never had half the apprehension of the French as of the Americans. They said the French were always busy in some little mechanical employ, or in gaming, or in playing the fool; but that the Americans seemed to be on the rack of invention to escape, or to elude some of the least agreeable of their regulations. In a word they cared but little for the Frenchmen; but were in constant dread of the increasing contrivance and persevering efforts of us Americans. They had built around the sides of the ship, and little above the surface of the water, a stage or flooring, on which the sentries walked during the whole night, singing out, every half hour, *"all's well."* Beside these sentries marching around the ship, they had a floating-guard in boats, rowing around all the ships during the live-long night. Whenever these boats rowed past a sentinel it was his duty to challenge them and theirs to answer; and this was done to ascertain whether they were French or American boats, come to *surprise* and carry by boarding, the *Crown Prince!* We used to laugh among ourselves at this ridiculous precaution. It must be remembered, that were were then up a small river, within thirty-two miles of London, and *three thousand* miles from our own country. However, "a burnt child dreads the fire," and an Englishman's fears may tell him, that what once happened, may happen again. About one hundred and fifty years ago, viz: in 1667, the Dutch sent one of their admirals up the river Medway, three miles above where we now lay, and singed the beard of *John Bull.* He has never entirely got over that fright, but turns pale and trembles ever since at the sight or name of a republican.

## CHAPTER III

OUR prison-ship contained a pretty well organized community. We were allowed to establish among ourselves an internal police for our own comfort and self-government. And here we adhered to the forms of our own adored constitution; for in place of making a King, Dukes and Lords, we elected a President and twelve Counsellors, who, having executive as well as legislative powers, we called *Committee men.* But instead of four years they were to hold their offices but four weeks, at the end of which a new set were chosen by the general votes of all the prisoners.

It was the duty of the president and his twelve counsellors to make wholesome laws and define crimes, and award punishments. We made laws and regulations respecting personal behavior and personal cleanliness, which last we enforced with particular care; for we had some lazy, lifeless, dirty fellows among us, that required attending to like children. They were like hogs, whose delight it is to eat, sleep and wallow in the dirt, and never work. We had, however, but very few of this low caste, and they were, in a great measure, pressed down by some chronical disorder. It was the duty of the president and the twelve committee men, or common council, to define precisely every act punishable by fine, whipping, or confinement in the *Black Hole.* I opposed, with all my might, this last mode of punishment as unequal, inhuman, and disgraceful to our national character. I contended that we, who had suffered so much, and complained so loud of the *Black Holes* of the *Regulus, Malabar* and other floating dungeons, should reject, from an humane principle, this horrid mode of torment. I urged, as a medical man, that the punishment of a confined black hole, was a very unequal mode of punishment; for that some men

of weak lungs and debilitated habit might die under the effects of that which another man could bear without much distress. I maintained that it was wicked, a sin against human nature, to take a well man, put him in a place that should destroy his health and very possibly shorten his days, by engrafting on him some incurable disorder. Some, on the other side, urged that as we were in the power of the British we should not be uncivil to them; and that our rejection of the punishment of the black hole might be construed into a reflection on the English government; so we suffered it to remain *in terrorem,* with a strong recommendation not to have recourse to it but in very extraordinary cases. This dispute plunged me deep into the philosophy of crimes and punishments; and I am convinced on mature reflection that we in America are as much too mild in our civil punishments, as the British are too severe. By what I have heard, I have inferred that the Hollanders have drawn a just line between both.

We used to have our stated as well as occasional courts. Beside a bench of judges, we had our orators, and expounders of our laws. It was amusing and interesting to see a sailor, in his round short jacket, addressing the committee or bench of judges, with a phiz as serious and with lies as specious as any of our common lawyers in Massachusetts. They would argue, turn and twist, evade, retreat, back out, renew the attack and dispute every inch of the ground, or rather the deck, with an address that astonished me. The surgeon of the ship said to me one day, after listening to some of our native salt-water pleaders, "these countrymen of yours are the most extraordinary men I ever met with. While you have such fellows as these, your country will never lose its liberty." I replied that this turn for legislation arose from our being all taught to read and write. "That alone did not give them," said he, "this acuteness of understanding and promptness of speech. It arises" said he, with great justness, "from fearless liberty."

I have already mentioned that we had Frenchmen in this prison-

ship. Instead of occupying themselves with forming a constitution and making a code of laws, and defining crimes, and adjusting punishments and holding courts, and pleading for and against the person arraigned, these Frenchmen had erected billiard tables and *roulettes,* or wheels of fortune, not merely for their own amusement, but to allure the Americans to hazard their money, which these Frenchmen seldom failed to win.

These Frenchmen exhibited a considerable portion of ingenuity, industry and patience in their little manufactories of bone, of straw, and of hair. They would work incessantly to get money, by selling these trifling wares; but many of them had a much more expeditious method of acquiring cash, and that was by gaming at the billiard tables and the wheels of fortune. Their skill and address at these apparent games of hazard were far superior to the Americans. They seemed calculated for gamesters; their vivacity, their readiness, and their everlasting professions of friendship were nicely adapted to inspire confidence in the unsuspecting American Jack Tar, who has no legerdemain about him. Most of the prisoners were in the way of earning a little money; but almost all of them were deprived of it by the French gamesters. Our people stood no chance with them, but were commonly stripped of every cent, whenever they set out seriously to play with them. How often have I seen a Frenchman capering, and singing and grinning, in consequence of his stripping one of our sailors of all his money; while our solemn Jack Tar was either scratching his head, or trying to whistle, or else walking slowly off with both hands stuck in his pocket, and looking like John Bull after concluding a treaty of peace with Louis Baboon.

I admire the French, and wish their nation to possess and enjoy peace, liberty and happiness; but I cannot say that I love these French prisoners. Beside common sailors there are several officers of the rank of captains, lieutenants, and I believe midshipmen; and it is these that are the most adroit gamesters. We have all tried

hard to respect them; but there is something in their conduct so much like swindling, that I hardly know what to say of them. When they knew that we had received money for the work we had been allowed to perform, they were very attentive, and complaisant and flattering. Some had been, or pretended to have been, in America. They would come round and say, "ah! Boston fine town, very pretty—Cape Cod fine town, very fine. Town of Rhode Island superb. Bristol ferry very pretty. General Washington *tres grand homme!* General Madison *brave homme!*" With these expressions and broken English, they would accompany, with their monkey tricks, capering and grinning and patting us on the shoulder, with, "the Americans are brave men—fight like Frenchmen"; and by their insinuating manners allure our men once more to their wheels of fortune and billiard-tables, and as sure as they did, so sure did they strip them of all their money. I must either say nothing of these Frenchmen, officers and all, or else I must speak as I found them. I hope they were not a just sample of their whole nation; for these gentry would exercise every imposition, and even insinuate the thing that is not, the more easily to plunder us of our hard earned pittance of small change. Had they shown any generosity like the British tar, I should have passed over their conduct in silence; but after they have stripped our men of every farthing, they would say to them—"Monsieur, you have won all our money, now lend us a little change to get us some coffee and sugar, and we will pay you when we shall earn more." "Ah, mon ami," says Monsieur, shrugging up his shoulders, "I am sorry, very sorry, indeed; it is *le fortune de guerre.* If you have lost your money you must win it back again; that is the fashion in my country—we no lend, that is not the fashion." I have observed that these Frenchmen are *fatalists.* Good luck, or ill luck is all fate with them. So of their national misfortunes; they shrug up their shoulders, and ascribe all to the inevitable decrees of fate. This is very different from the Americans, who ascribe every thing to prudence or imprudence, strength or weakness. Our men say,

that if the game was wrestling, playing at ball or foot-ball, or firing at a mark, or rowing, or running a race, they should be on fair ground with them. Our fellows offered to institute this game with them; there should be a strong canvas bag, with two pieces of cord four feet long; the contest should be, for one man to put the other in the bag, with the liberty of first tying his hands or his feet, or both if he chose. Here would be a contest of strength and hardihood, but not of cunning or legerdemain. But the Frenchmen all united in saying, "No, it was not the fashion in their country to tie gentlemen up in sacks."

There were here some Danes as well as Dutchmen. It is curious to observe their different looks and manners, which I can hardly believe to be owing entirely to the manner of bringing up. Here we see the thick-skulled plodding Dane, making a wooden dish; or else some of the most ingenious making a clumsy ship: while others submitted to the dirtiest drudgery of the hulk, for money; and there we see a Dutchman, picking to pieces tarred ropes which, when reduced to its original form of hemp, they call oakum; or else you see him lazily stowed away in some corner, with his pipe, surrounded with smoke and "steeping his senses in forgetfulness;" while here and there and every where, you find a lively singing Frenchman, working in hair, or carving out of a bone, a lady, a monkey, or the central figure of the crucifixion! Among the specimens of American ingenuity I most admired their ships, which they built from three to five feet long. Some of them were said by the navy-officers to be perfect as regarded proportion, and exact, as it regarded the miniature representation of a merchantman, or sloop of war. By the specimens of ingenuity of these people of different nations you could discover their respective ruling passions.

Had not the French proved themselves to be a very brave people, I should have doubted it by what I observed of them on board the prison-ship. They would scold, quarrel and fight, by

slapping each other's chops with the flat hand, and cry like so many girls. I have often thought that one of our Yankees, with his iron fist, could by one blow send Monsieur into his nonentity. Perhaps such a man as Napoleon Bonaparte could make any nation courageous; but there is some difference between courage and bravery. I have been amused, amid captivity, on observing the volatile Frenchman singing,dancing, fencing, grinning and gambling, while the American tar lifts his hardy front and weather beaten countenance, despising them all, but the dupe of them; just about as much disposed to squander his money among girls and fiddlers as the English sailor; but never so in love with it as to study the arts and legerdemain to obtain it. I have at times wondered that the hard fisted Yankee did not revenge impositions on the skulls of some of these blue-skinned sons of the old continent. Is there not a country, where there is one series or chain of impositions, from the Pope downwards? There is no such thing in the United States. That is a country of laws; and their very sailors are all full of rights and wrongs; of justice and injustice; and of defining crimes, and ascertaining the butts and bounds of national and individual rights.

It was a pleasant circumstance that I could, now and then obtain some entertaining books. I had read most of Dean Swift's works, but had never met with his celebrated allegory of *John Bull* until I found it on board this prison-ship. I read this little work with more delight than I can express. I had always heard the English nation, including king, lords, commons, country squires and merchants, called *"John Bull,"* but I never before knew that the name originated from this piece of wit of Dean Swift's. Now I learnt for the first time that the English king, court and nation, taken collectively, were characterized under the name of *John Bull;* and that of France under the name of *Louis Baboon;* and that of the Dutch of *Nick Frog;* and that of Spain under *Lord Strutt;* that the church of England was called *John's Mother;* the

parliament his wife; and Scotland his poor ill-treated, raw-boned, mangy *Sister Peg*. While I was shaking my sides at the comical characteristical painting of the witty Dean of St. Patrick, the Frenchmen would come around me to know what the book contained which so much tickled my fancy; they thought it was an obscene book, and wished some one to translate it to them: but all they could get out of me was the word *"John Bull* and *Louis Baboon!"*

It is now the 30th of November, a month celebrated to a proverb in England, for its gloominess. We have had a troubled sky and foggy for several weeks past. The pleasant prospect of the surrounding shores has been obscured a great portion of this month. The countenances of our companions partake of our dismal atmosphere. It has even sobered our Frenchmen; they do not sing and caper as usual; nor do they swing their arms about, and talk with strong emphasis of every trifle. The thoughts of home obtrude upon us; and we feel as the poor Jews felt on the banks of the Euphrates, when their task-masters and prison-keepers insisted on their singing a song. We all hung up our fiddles, as the Jews did their harps, and sat about, here and there, like barn-door fowls when moulting.

Our captivity on the banks of the river Medway, bordered with willows, brought to my mind the plaintive song of the children of Israel, in captivity on the banks of the river Euphrates, which psalm, among others, I used to sing with my mother and sisters on Sunday evenings, when an innocent boy, and long before the wild notion of rambling from a comfortable and plentiful home, came into my head. It is the 137th Psalm, Tate and Brady's version.

When we our weary limbs to rest
  Sat down by proud Euphrates' stream,
We wept, with doleful thoughts opprest.
  And *Salem* was our mournful theme.

Our harps, that, when with joy we sung,
  Were wont their tuneful parts to bear,
With silent strings, neglected hung,
  On willow-trees, that wither'd there.

Meanwhile our foes, who all conspir'd
  To triumph in our slavish wrongs,
Music and mirth of us requir'd,
  "Come sing us one of Zion's songs."

How shall we tune our voice to sing?
  Or touch our harps with skilful hands?
Shall hymns of joy to GOD, OUR KING,
  Be sung by slaves in foreign lands?

O, SALEM! Our once happy seat!
  When I of thee forgetful prove,
Let then my trembling hand forget
  The speaking strings with art to move!

If I, to mention thee, forbear,
  Eternal silence seize my tongue!
Or if I sing one cheerful air,
  Till my *deliv'rance* is my song.

## CHAPTER IV

I COME now to a delicate subject; and shall speak accordingly with due caution; I mean the character and conduct of Mr. Beasly, the American Agent for prisoners. He resides in the city of London, thirty-two miles from this place. There have been loud and constant complaints made of his conduct towards his countrymen suffering confinement at three thousand miles distance from all they hold most dear and valuable, and he but half a day's journey from us. Mr. Beasly knew that there were some thousands of his countrymen imprisoned in a foreign land for no crime but for defending and fighting under the American flag, that emblem of national independence and sovereignty; if he reflected at all he must have known these countrymen of his were in general thinking men; men who had homes, and "fire places." He knew they had, some of them, fathers and mothers, wives and children, brothers and sisters in the United States, who lived in houses that had "fire places," and that they had in general been brought up in more ease and plenty than the same class in England; he knew they were a people of strong affections to their relatives, and strong attachments to their country; and he might have supposed that some of them had as good an education as himself; he must, or ought to have thought constantly that they were suffering imprisonment, deprivations and occasionally sickness in a foreign country, where he is specially commissioned and placed to attend to their comfort, relieve, if practicable their wants, and to be the channel of communication between them and their families. The British commander or Commodore of all the prison ships in this river visited them all once a month, and paid good attention to all their wants.

When we first arrived here, we wrote in a respectful style to Mr.

Beasly, as the Agent from our government for the prisoners in England. We glanced at our sufferings at Halifax; and stated our extreme sufferings on the passage to England, and until we arrived in the river Medway. We remarked that we expected that the government of the United States intended to treat her citizens in capivity in a foreign land all equally alike. We represented to him that we were, in general destitute of clothing and many conveniences that a trifling sum of money would obtain; that we did not doubt the good will and honorable intentions of our government; and that he doubtless knew of their kind intentions towards us all.—*But he never returned a word of answer.* We found that all those prisoners who had been confined here at Chatham from the commencement of the war bore Mr. Beasly an inveterate hatred. They accuse him of an unfeeling neglect, and disregard to their pressing wants. They say he never visited them but once, and that then his conduct gave more disgust than his visit gave pleasure. Where there is much smoke there must be some fire. The account they gave is this — that when he came on board he seemed fearful that they would come too near him, he therefore requested that additional sentries might be placed on the gangways to keep the prisoners from coming aft on the quarter deck. He then sent for one of their number, said a few words to him relative to the prisoners; but not a word of information in answer to the questions repeatedly put to him; and of which we were all very anxious to hear. He acted as if he was afraid that any questions should be put to him; so that without waiting to hear a single complaint, and without waiting to examine into any thing respecting their situation, their health, or their wants, he hastily took his departure, amidst the hooting and hisses of his countrymen, as he passed over the side of the ship.

Written representations of the neglect of this nominal agent for us prisoners were made to the government of the United States, which we sent by different conveyances; but whether they ever

reached the person of the Secretary we never knew. Several individuals among the prisoners wrote to Mr. Beasly for information on subjects in which their comfort and happiness were concerned, but received no answer. Once indeed a letter was received from his clerk in an imperious style, announcing that no notice would be taken of any letters from individuals, (which was probably correct) but those only that were written by the committee collectively. The Committee accordingly wrote, but their letter was treated with the same silent neglect. This desertion of his countrymen in their utmost need, excited an universal expression of disgust if not resentment. Cut off from their own country, surrounded only by enemies, swindled by their neighbours, winter coming on and no clothing proper for the approaching season, and the American agent for themselves and other prisoners within three or four hours' journey, and yet abandoned by him to the tender mercies of our declared enemies, it is no wonder that our prisoners detested, at length, the name of Beasly. We made every possible allowance for this gentleman; we said to each other "he may have no funds; he may have the will but not the power to help us; his commission, and his directions may not extend so high as our expectations"; still we could make no excuse for his not visiting us, and enquiring and seeing for himself our real situation. He might have answered our letters, and encouraged us not to despair but to hope for relief; he might have visited us as often as did the English Commodore, which was once in four weeks; but he should not have insulted our feelings the only time he did visit us, and humble and mortify us in the view of the Frenchmen, who saw, and remarked that our agent considered us no more than so many hogs. The Emperor Napoleon has visited some of his hospitals *incog.* has viewed the situation of the sick and wounded, examined their food and eaten of their bread, and once threw a cup of wine in the face of a steward because he thought it not good enough for the soldier; but—some of our agents are men of more consequence, in their own eyes, than Napoleon!

During the war it was stated to our government that *six thousand two hundred and fifty-seven* seamen had been pressed and forcibly detained on board British ships of war. Events have proved the correctness of this statement; and this slavery has been a subject of merriment, and a theme for ridicule among the Federalists. They say it makes no more difference to a sailor what ship he is on board than it does to a hog what stye he is in. Others not quite so brutal, have said "Hush! it may be so; but we must bear it; England is mistress of the Ocean and her existence depends on this practice of impressment; her naval power must be submitted to—give us merchants commerce, and these Jack tars will take care of themselves; for it is not worth while to lose a profitable trade for the sake of a few ignorant sailors, who never had any rights, and who have neither liberty, property or homes but what we merchants give to them."

The American seamen on board the *Crown Prince,* were chiefly *men who had been impressed into the British Navy previous to the war;* but who, on hearing of the Declaration of war against Great Britain by the people of the United States, gave themselves up as prisoners of war; but instead of being directly exchanged, the English Government thought it proper to send them on board these prison ships to be retained there during the war, evidently to prevent them from entering into our own navy. It should be remembered that they were all citizens of the United States sailing in merchant ships; and yet the merchants, at least those of Boston and the other New-England seaports, have very generally mocked the complaints of impressed seamen and derided their representations, and have even denied the story of their impressment. Even the Governor of Massachusetts (Strong) has affected in his public speeches to the Legislature to represent this crying outrage as the mere groundless clamor of a party opposed to his election! Whether groundless or not, I will venture to assert that the names of many of the leading Federalists in Massachusetts, and a few others will

never be forgotten by the inhabitants of the prison ships at Chatham, at Halifax and in the West Indies.

We are now at peace, and the tide of party has so far slackened that we can tell the truth without the suspicion of political or party designs. I shall relate only what I have collected from the men themselves, who were never in the way of reading our newspapers, or of hearing of the speeches of the friends of the British in Congress or in our State Legislatures.—I think I ought, however, here to premise that my family were of that party in Massachusetts called Federal; that is, we voted for Governor Strong, and Federal Senators and Representatives; our clergyman was also Federal and preached and prayed Federally, and we read none but Federal newspapers, and associated with none but Federalists; of course we believed all that Governor Strong said, and approved all that our Senators and Representatives voted, and believed all that was printed in the Boston Federal papers. The whole family, and myself with them, believed all that Colonel Timothy Pickering had written about impressment of seamen, and about the weakness and wickedness of the President and administration; we believed them all to be under the pay and influence of Bonaparte, who we knew was the first Lieutenant of Satan. We believed all that was said about *"Free trade and sailors' rights"* was all stuff and nonsense, brought forward by the Republicans, whom we called Democrats and Jacobins, to gull the people out of their liberty and property, in order to surrender both to the Tyrant of France. We believed entirely that the war was unnecessary and wicked, and declared with no other design but to injure England and gratify France. We believed also that the whole of the administration, and every man of the Republican party, from Jefferson and Madison down to our—was either fool or knave. If we did not believe that every Republican was a scoundrel, we were sure and certain that every scoundrel was a Republican. In some points our belief was as strong and as fixed as any

in the papal dominions; for example—we maintained stiffly that Governor Strong, Lieut. Gov. Phillips, H. G. Otis, and John Lowell and Francis Blake, Esqrs., were for talents, knowledge, piety and virtue the very first men in the United States, and ought to be at the head of the nation; or—to express it *all* in one word, as my sister once did, *"Federalism is the politics of a gentleman, and of a lady, but Republicanism is the low cant of the vulgar"*; of such men as your Tom Jeffersons, Jim Madisons, and John Adams, and Col. Monroes.

With these expanded and enlightened ideas of men and things did I, *Perigrinus Americanus,* quit my father's house of ease and plenty to make a short trip in a Privateer, more for a frolic than for any thing serious, being very little concerned whether I was taken or not, provided my capture would be the means of carrying me among the people who I had long adored for their superior bravery, magnanimity, religion, knowledge, and justice; which opinions I had imbibed from their own writers, in verse and prose. Beside the Federal newspapers, I had dipped into the posthumous works of Fisher Ames enough to inspire me with adoration of England, abhorrence of France and a contempt for my own country; or to express it all in fewer words, *I was a Federalist of the Boston stamp.* These are the outlines of my preconceived opinions, which I carried with me into Melville Prison at Halifax. I was not the only one by many who entered that abode of misery with similar notions. How often have I wished that Governor Strong and his principal supporters were here with us, learning wisdom, and acquiring just notions of men, things and governments.

But to return from the Governor and Council, and other great men of Massachusetts, to the British prison ship at Chatham—The British had been in the habit of pressing the sailors from our merchant ships, ever since the year 1755. The practice was always abhorred, and often resisted, and sometimes even unto death. We naturally inferred that with our independence we should preserve

the persons of our citizens from violence and deep disgrace; for to an American a whipping is a degradation worse than death. Since the termination of the war with England, which guaranteed our independence, the British never pretended to impress American citizens; but pretended to the right of entering our vessels and taking from them the natives of Britain or Ireland, and this was their general rule of conduct—they would forcibly board our vessels, and the boarding-officer, who was commonly a lieutenant, completely armed with a sword, dirk, and loaded pistols, would muster the crew, and examine the persons of the sailors as a planter examines a lot of negroes exposed for sale; and all the thin, puny, or sickly men he allowed to be American—but all the stout, hearty, red-cheeked, iron-fisted, crispy-haired fellows were declared to be British; and if such men showed their certificates of citizenship and place of birth, they were pronounced forgeries, and the unfortunate men were dragged over the side into the boat, and forced on board his floating prison. Not a day in the year but there occurred such a scene as this; and to our shame be it spoken, we endured this outrage on man through the administrations of Washington, Adams and Jefferson, before we declared war, to revenge the villainy. If an high-spirited man, thus kidnapped, refused to work, he was first deprived of victuals; and if starvation did not induce him to work, he was stripped and tied up, and whipped like a thief!—and many a noble-spirited fellow suffered this accursed punishment. If he seized the first opportunity, as he ought, to run away from his tyrants, and was taken, he was severely whipped; and for a second attempt the punishment was doubled, and for a third he was hanged, or shot.

It happened on our declaration of war, chiefly on account of this atrocious treatment of the sailors, that thousands of our countrymen had been impressed into the British navy and more or less were found in almost every ship; most of these informed their respective captains, that being American citizens they could not remain in the

service of a nation to aid them in killing their brethren, and in pulling down the flag of their native country. They declared firmly that it was fighting against nature for a man to fight against his native land, the only land to which he owed a natural duty. Some noble British commanders admired their patriotic spirit and permitted them to quit their ships and go to prison; while other captains, of an opposite and ignoble character refused to hear their declarations, and ordered them to return to what they called *their duty;* which they accompanied with threats of severe punishment if they disobeyed. But some, whose noble spirits would have honored any man or station, adhered to their first determination, *not to fight against their own brothers, or aid in pulling down the flag of their nation.* These were immediately put in irons, and fed on scanty allowance of bread and water; for if any thing can bring down the high spirit of an hearty young man, it is the slow torture of hunger and thirst. When it was found that this had not the effect of debasing the American spirit, the young sufferer was brought upon deck, and stripped to his waist, and sometimes lower, and—Oh! my pen cannot write it for indignation! resentment, and a righteous revenge shakes my hand with rage, while I attempt to record the act of villainy. Yes, my countrymen and my countrywomen, our noble-minded young men, brought up in more ease and plenty than half the officers of a British man of war, are violently stripped, and tied fast and immovable by a rope to a cannon, or to the iron railing of what is called the gang-way, and when he is so fixed as to stretch the skin and muscles to the utmost, he is whipped by a long, heavy and hard-knotted whip, four times more formidable and heavy than the whip allowed to be used by the carters, truck or car men, on their horses. With this heavy and knotted scourge the boatswain's mate, who is generally selected for his strength, after stripping off his jacket that he may strike the harder, lashes this young man, on his delicate skin until his back is cut from his shoulders to his waist! Few men, of ordinary feelings of humanity, could bear to see, without great emotion, even a thief or a robber so severely punished.

But what must be the feelings of an American to see such a cruel operation upon the body of his countryman, of his mess-mate and companion? We will venture to say, that if a dog, or a horse, were tied fast to a post, in any street of any town in America, and lashed with such an heavy knotted whip, swung by the strong arm of a vigorous man, although their skins were covered and defended by their hair or fur, we do not believe that the inhabitants would see it inflicted on the poor beast without carrying the whipper before a magistrate, to answer to the law for his cruelty. Yet what is the whipping of a beast, devoid of reason, and covered with fur, to this severe operation upon the delicate skin and flesh of one of our young men? And all for what? For nobly maintaining and upholding the first and great principle of our nature. Yet has this heroism of our enslaved seamen been overlooked, and even derided by the Federal merchant and the Federal politician, and the Federal member of congress, and the Federal clergyman! Some of our brave fellows have been brought upon deck every punishing day, and undergone this horrid punishment three or four times over, until the crews of the men of war were disposed to cry out shame, upon their own officers. Some of our poor fellows could not sustain these repeated tortures, which is not to be wondered at, and have finally gone to work as soon as they recovered from their barbarous usage. Others, of firmer frames and firmer minds, have wearied out their persecutors, whose infernal dispositions they have defied and triumphed over; such have been sent out of the ship into our prison-ships; and here they are to tell their own story, to show to their countrymen the everlasting marks of their tormenters, the British navy officers. With what indignation, rage and horror have I seen our brave fellows actuated, while one of these heroes of national rights and national character has been relating his sufferings, and showing his degrading scars, made on his body by the accursed whip of a boatswain's mate, by order of an infamous captain of the British navy! You talk of peace, friendship and cordiality with the nation from whom most of us sprang. It is

well, perhaps, that the two nations should be at peace politically, but can you ever expect cordiality to subsist between our impressed and cruelly treated sailor, and a British navy officer? It is next to impossible. Our ill-treated sailor, lacerated in his flesh, wounded in his honor, and debased by the slavish hand of a boatswain's mate never can forget the barbarians; nor ever can nor ever ought to forgive them. The God of nature has ordained that nations should be separated by a difference of language, religion, customs, and manners, for wise purposes; but where two great nations like the English and American have the same language, institutions and manners, he may possibly have allowed the devil to inspire one with a portion of his own infernal spirit of cruelty, in order to effect a separation and keep apart two people, superficially resembling each other.

It may be for good and wise purposes, in the order of Providence, that there should be a partition wall between us and Britain. We have had to deplore that three thousand miles of ocean is not half enough; for avarice, fashion and folly are continually drawing us together; and these often drown the still small voice of patriotism, whose language is, *"Come out of her, O my people!"* There is nothing that tends so strongly to keep us asunder as the different dispositions of the two people. The Americans are a kind, humane, tender-hearted people, as free from cruelty as any nation upon earth, and possessing as much generosity towards an enemy they have vanquished and who is at their mercy, as any people to be found on the records of the human kind. Their laws express it; the records of their courts prove it; the history of the war illustrates it; and I hope that all our actions declare it. We may change, and become as hard hearted and cruel as the English. It may be that we are now in the *chivalrous* age or period of our nation, which is the generous, youthful stage of a nation's life; this may pass away and we may sink into the cold, phlegmatic, calculating cruelty of the present Britons; and become like them objects of hatred to our

own descendants. Whatever we may, in the course of degeneration, become, we assert it, as an incontrovertible fact, that the Britons are now and have been for many generations past vastly our inferiors on the score of polished humanity. On this subject we would refer the reader to the history of England, written by eminent Englishmen and Scotchmen, and to Shakespeare's historical plays, and to the records of their courts, the annals of Newgate and of the Tower, and to their penal code generally; but above all to their horrid *military* punishments, in their army and in their navy; and then contrast the whole with the history of America, of her courts, and of her army and navy punishments.

When the Algerines captured some of our vessels and made slaves of the crew, a very high degree of sensibility was excited. It was the theme of every newspaper and oration, and the subject of almost every conversation. The horrors of Algerine slavery was considered as the *ne plus ultra* of human misery; but it has so happened that we have many sailors returned again to their country, who have been enslaved at Algiers and have been impressed and detained on board British men of war, and afterwards thrown into their prison-ships. The united opinion of these people is, that the Algerine slavery is much more tolerable than the British slavery. The Algerines make the common sailors work from six to eight hours in the day, but they give them good food and enough of it, and lodge them in airy places, and always employ the officers according to their rank; whereas the British seem to take a delight in confounding and mixing together the officers with their men. As to their punishments among themselves, they will cut off a man's head, and strangle him with a bow-string, in a summary manner; but a Turk or Algerine would sicken at the sight of a whipping in the navy and in the *army* of the *Christian* king of England. There is no nation upon this globe of earth that treats its soldiers and sailors with that degree of barbarity common to their camps, garrisons and men of war; for what they lack in the number of lashes on

board a ship, they make up in the severity of infliction, so as to render the punishment nearly equal to the Russian *knout.*

If any one is curious to see British military flogging treated scientifically, I would refer him to chapter xii, vol. 2d, of Dr. R. Hamilton's "Duties of a Regimental Surgeon," from page 22, to 82. The reading of it is enough to spoil an hungry man's dinner. We there read of the suppuration and stench that follows after seven or eight hundred lashes; and that some men have complained that its offensiveness was almost equal to the whipping. We there read of the surgeon discharging a pound and a half of matter from an abscess, formed in consequence of a merciless punishment. The reader may also be entertained with the discussion whether it is best to wash the *cats* clear from the blood (for the executioners lay on twenty-five strokes, and then another twenty-five, and so on, till the nine hundred or a thousand ordered are finished), or whether it is best to let the blood dry on the knots of the whip, in order to make it cut the sharper. There, too, you may learn the advantage of having the naked wretch tied fast and firm, so that he may not wring and twist about to avoid the torture, which, he says, if not attended to may destroy the sight, by the whip cutting his eyes, or his cheeks and breasts may be cut for want of this precaution. He says, however, that in those regiments who punish by running the gauntlet it is almost impossible to prevent the man from being cut from the nape of the neck to his hams. You will there find a description of a neat contrivance used at Gibraltar, which was compounded of the stocks and the pillory. The soldier's legs were held firm in two apertures of a thick plank, while his body and head were bent down to a plank placed in a perpendicular direction, to receive the man's head, and two more apertures to confine his arms. In this immovable posture, human beings, Englishmen, Irishmen and Scotchmen, have had their flesh lacerated for more than half an hour! But the Doctor informs us that the men did not like this new contrivance, as it checked their vociferation and injured their

lungs; so it was discontinued, and they returned again to the halberts, where their hands were tied up over their heads. Some of these poor wretches have been known to gnaw the flesh of their own arms, in the agonies of torture!

Americans! think of these barbarities, and bless the memories of those statesmen and warriors who have separated you as a nation from a cruel people, who have neither bowels of compassion or any tenderness of feeling, for the soldier or the sailor. They value them and care for them on the same principle that we value a horse, and no more, merely as an animal that is useful to them. I have for some time believed that America would be the grave of the British character. Our free presses dare speak of their military whippings, without fearing the punishment inflicted on the editor of their *Political Register*.[1]

Those pressed men liberated from the British men of war, and sent on board this ship, the *Crown Prince*, that is, sent from one prison to another, are large, well made, fine looking fellows, for such they usually select as Englishmen. Some of them were men of colour. The following anecdote does honor to the character of Sir Sydney Smith, as well as to that of our brave tars. Sir Sydney was then off Toulon. On the news reaching the crew that the United States had declared war against England, all the Americans on board had determined not to fight against their country, or aid in striking its flag; they therefore asked permission to speak with Sir Sydney, who permitted them to come altogether on the quarter-deck; they told him they were all Americans by birth, and impressed against their will into the British service, and forcibly detained; that although they had consented to do the duties of Englishmen on board his ship, they could not fight against their own country. "Nor do I wish you should," was the answer of this gallant knight. On being reminded by one of his officers that

[1] William Cobbett, who in 1810 was sentenced to two years' imprisonment and £1,000 fine, for denouncing army flogging.

they were nearly all petty officers, he observed to them that they had been promoted in consequence of their good behaviour; and that if they could, as he hoped they would, reconcile themselves to the service, he should continue to promote them, and reward their good behaviour. They thanked him; but assured him that it was against their principles, as Americans, and against a sense of duty towards their beloved country, to fight against their brethren or to aid in pulling down the emblem of their nation's sovereignty. He promised to report the business to his superiors, and turning to one of his officers, said, "I wish all Englishmen were as strongly attached to their country, as these Americans are to theirs."

Another instance of a British commander, the opposite of this, is worth relating. I give it as the sufferer related it to us all, and as confirmed by other testimony beside his own. The man declared himself to be an American, and as such asked for his discharge. The captain said he lied, that he was no American, but an Englishman, and that he only made this declaration to get his liberty; and he ordered him to be severely whipped; and on every punishing day he was asked if he still persisted in calling himself an American and in refusing to do duty? The man obstinately persisted. At length the captain became enraged to a high degree; he ordered the man to be stripped and tied up to the gratings, and after threatening him with the severest flogging that was in his power to inflict, he asked the man if he would avoid the punishment, and *do his duty?* "Yes," said the noble sailor, "*I will do my duty,* and that is to blow up your ship the very first opportunity in my power." This was said with a stern countenance, and a corresponding voice. The captain seemed astonished, and first looking over his larboard shoulder, and then over his starboard shoulder, said to his officers, "this is a damn'd queer fellow! I do not believe he is an Englishman. I suppose he is crazy; so you may unlash him, boatswain"; and he was soon after sent out of that ship into this

prison-ship. This man will carry the marks of the accursed cat to his grave!

O, ye Tories! ye Federalists, ye every thing but what you should be, who have derided the sufferings of the sailor and mocked at his misery—had you one half of the heroic virtue that filled and sustained the brave heart of this noble sailor, you would cease to eulogize these tyrants of the ocean, or to revile your own government for drawing the sword and running all risks to redress the wrongs of the oppressed sailor. The cruel conduct of the British ought to be trumpeted throughout the terraqueous globe; but we would fain cover over, if possible, the depravity of some few of our merchants and politicians, who regard a sailor in the same light as a truckman does his horse.

Several of these impressed men have declared that in looking back on their past sufferings on board English men of war, and comparing it with their present confinement at Chatham, they feel themselves in a Paradise. The ocean, the mirror of heaven, is as much the element of an American as of an Englishman. The great Creator has given it to us, as well as to them; and we will guard its honor accordingly, by chasing cruelty from its surface, whether it shall appear in the habit of a Briton or an Algerine.

## CHAPTER V

IT is now the last day of the year 1813; and we live pretty comfortably. Prisoners of war, confined in an old man of war hulk, must not expect to sleep on beds of down, or to fare sumptuously every day, as if we were at home with our indulgent mothers and sisters. All things taken into consideration, I believe we are nearly as well treated here in the river Medway as the British prisoners are in Salem or Boston; not quite so well fed with fresh meat, and a variety of vegetables, because this country does not admit of it; but we do not suffer as we did at Halifax, and above all as we suffered on board the floating dungeons the transports, and store-ship *Malabar*.

All the Frenchmen are sent out of the ship excepting about forty officers, and these are all gamblers, ready and willing and able to fleece us all, have we ever so much money. I wonder that the prison-ship police has not put down this infamous practice. It is a fomenter of almost all the evil passions, of those particularly which do the least honor to the human heart. Our domestic faction have uttered a deal of nonsense about a *French influence* in America. By what I have observed here, I never can believe that the French will ever have any influence to speak of in the United States. We never agreed with them but in one point, and that was in our hatred to the English. There we united cordially; there we could fight at the same gun, and there we could mingle our blood together. The English may thank themselves for this. They, with their friends and allies, the *Algerines* and the *Savages* of our own wilderness, have made a breach in that great Christian family, whose native language was the English, which is every year growing wider and wider.

*January,* 1814.—We take two or three London newspapers, and through them know a little what is going forward in the world. We find by them that Joanna Southcote, and Molyneux, the black bruiser, engross the attention of the most respectable portion of John Bull's family. Not only the British officers but the ladies wear the orange-colored cockade, in honor of the Prince of Orange, and because the Dutch have taken Holland. The yellow or orange color is all the rage; it has been even extended to the clothing of the prisoners. Our sailors say that it is because we are under the command of a *yellow Admiral,* or at least a *yellow Commodore,* which is about the same thing.

About this time there came on board of us a recruiting sergeant, to try to enlist some of our men in the service of the Prince Regent. He offered us sixteen guineas; but he met with no success. Some of the men "*bored*" him pretty well. We had a very good will to throw the slave overboard, but as we dare not, we contented ourselves with telling him what a flogging the Yankees would give him and his platoon, when they got over to America.

About five hundred prisoners have recently arrived in this "*reach,*" from Halifax. There are between one hundred and fifty and two hundred of Colonel Boerstler's men, who were deceived, decoyed, and captured near Beaver Dams, on the twenty-third of June, 1813. These men were principally from Pennsylvania and Maryland. It is difficult to describe their wretched appearance; and as difficult to narrate their sufferings on the passage, without getting into a rage, inconsistent with the character of an impartial journalist.

To the everlasting disgrace of the British government, and of a British man of war, be it known that these miserable victims to hardheartedness were crowded together in the black hole of a ship as we were, just like sheep in a sheep-fold. They allowed but two to come upon deck at a time. They were covered with nastiness and overrun with vermin, for these poor creatures

were not allowed to wash their clothes or themselves. O, how my soul did abhor the English, when I saw these poor soldiers! It is no wonder that people who only see and judge of the Americans by the prisoners, that they conceive us to be a horde of savages. They see us while prisoners, in the most degraded and odious light that we ever before saw or felt ourselves in. I can easily conceive how bad and scanty food, dirt, vermin, and a slow chronical disease, or low spirits, may change the temper and character of large bodies of men. I would advise all my countrymen, should it ever be their hard lot to be again in British bondage, to exert themselves to appear as clean and smart in their persons as their situation will possibly admit. I believe a soldier feels more of the martial spirit when in uniform, than in a loose drab coat. The same feeling may extend to a judge in his robes, and to a parson in his gown. They all may feel braver, more conscientious, and pious, for this "outward and visible sign," of what the inward ought to be.

These poor soldiers were, of all men among us, the most miserable; they had suffered greatly for want of good and sufficient food, as six of them had to feed on that quantity which the British allowed to four of their own men. By what we could gather the most barbarous, the most unfeeling neglect, and actual ill treatment, was experienced on board the *Nemesis.* This ship seems, like the *Malabar,* to be damned to everlasting reproach. I forgot to enquire whether her Captain and her Surgeon were Scotchmen.

We turn with disgust and resentment from such ships as the *Regulus,* the *Malabar,* and the *Nemesis,* and mention with pleasure the *Poictiers,* of 74 guns. The captain and officers of this ship behaved to the prisoners she brought with the same kindness and humanity as I presume the captain, officers and crew of an American man of war would towards British prisoners. They considered our men as living, sensitive beings, feeling the inconveniences of hunger and thirst, and the pleasure of the gratifications of these instinctive appetites; they seemed to consider also that we were ra-

tional beings; and it is possible they may have suspected that some of us might have had our rational and improvable faculty increased by education; they might, moreover, have thought that we had, like them, the powers of reminiscence, and the same dispositions to revenge; or they might not have thought much on the subject but acted from their own generous and humane feelings. I wish it were in my power to record the names of the officers of the *Poictiers.* Of this ship we can remark, that she had long been on the American station, long enough to know the American character, and to respect it. Her officers had a noble specimen of American bravery and humanity, when the American sloop *Wasp* took the British sloop *Frolic,* and both were soon after taken by the *Poictiers.* The humane, and we dare say, brave Capt. Beresford, has the homage of respect for his proper line of conduct towards those Americans whom the fortune of war put under his command. We drank the healths, in the best beer we could get, of the Captain, officers and crew of his Britannic Majesty's line of battle ship *Poictiers.*

It may be tedious to our readers, especially if they be British, but we cannot yet leave the subject of the inhuman treatment of the American prisoners of war, while on their passage from Halifax to Chatham. The condition of the soldiers was the most deplorable. Some of these men were born in the interior, and had never seen the salt ocean; they enlisted in Boerstler's regiment, and were taken by the British and Indians, somewhere between Fort George and York, the capital of Upper Canada. They were pretty much stripped of their clothing, soon after they were taken, and their march to Montreal was conducted with very little regard to their feelings; but when sick they were well attended to by the medical men of the enemy; their passage from Quebec to Halifax, down the river St. Lawrence, was barbarous. They suffered for victuals, clothes, and every other conveniency. The men say that they had more instances of real kindness from the Indians than from the British. But on their passage across the Atlantic, their situation was

horrible, as may be well supposed, when it is considered that these soldiers had never been at sea, and of course could not shift and *shirk* about, as the sailors call it, as could the seamen; they were of course sea-sick; and were continually groping and tumbling about in the dark prison of a ship's hold. They suffered a double portion of misery compared with the sailors, to whom the rolling of the ship in a gale of wind, and the stench of bilge-water, were matters of no grievance; but were serious evils to these landsmen, who were constantly treading upon, or running against and tumbling over each other. Many of them were weary of their lives, and some laid down dejected in despair, hoping never to rise again. Disheartened, and of course sick, these young men became negligent of their persons, not caring whether they ever added another day to their wretched existence, so that when they came on board the prison ship, they were loathsome objects of disgust. A mother could not have known her own son nor a sister her brother, disguised and half consumed as they were with a variety of wretchedness. They were half naked, and it was now the middle of winter, and within thirty miles of London, in the nineteenth century, an era famous for Bible societies, for missionary and humane societies, and for all the proud boastings of Christian and evangelical virtue; under the reign of a king and prince renowned for their liberality and magnanimity towards *French* Catholics, (but not *Irish* ones,) and towards Ferdinand the bigot, his holiness the Pope, and the venerable institution of the holy Inquisition. Alas! poor old *John Bull,* thou art in thy dotage, with thy thousand ships in the great salt ocean and thy half a dozen *victorious ones* in the Serpentine river, *alias* the splendid gutter dug out in Hyde Park for the amusement of British children six feet high. Can the world wonder that America, in her present age of chivalry, should knock over these doting old fellows and make them the derision of the universe?

I can no otherwise account for this base treatment of the Ameri-

cans than by supposing that the British government had concluded in the summer and autumn of 1813 that America could not stand the tug of war with England, that MADISON was unpopular, and that the Federalists, or British faction in America, were prevailing, especially in New-England; and that, being sure of conquest, they should commence the subjugation of the United States by degrading its soldiery and seamen as they have the brave Irish. They may have been led into this error by our Federal newspapers, which are generally vehicles of misinformation. The faction may impede and embarrass for a time, but they never can long confine the nervous arm of the American Hercules.

Candor influences me to confess that there were more attempts than one to rise and take these men of war transports. I find that several experiments were made, but, that they were always betrayed, by some Englishman or Irishman that had crept into American citizenship. I hope the time is not far off, when we shall reject from our service every man not known absolutely to have been born in the United States.[1] Whenever these foreigners get drunk, they betray their partiality to their own country and their dislike of ours. I hope our navy never will be disgraced or endangered by these renegadoes. Every man is more or less a villain who fights against his own country. The Irish are so ill-treated at home, that it is no wonder they quit their native soil for a land of more liberty and plenty, and they are often faithful to the country that adopts them; but never trust an Englishman, and above all a Scotchman. It is a happy circumstance that America wants neither. She had rather have one English manufacturer than an hundred English sailors. We labor under the inconvenience of speaking the same language with the enemies of our rising greatness. I know by my own personal experience that English books, published since our revolutionary war, have a pernicious tendency in Anglifying the pure American character. I have been amused in listening to the wrangling con-

[1] Dr. Waterhouse was ahead of his times, but had his views prevailed, what a vast improvement would have taken place in our political system since he wrote.

versation of an English, an Irish, and an American sailor when all three were half drunk; and this was very often the case during this month of January, as many of our men who had been in the British naval service received payment from the government; and this filled our abode with noise, riot, confusion and sometimes fighting. The day was spent in gambling and the night in drunkenness; for now all would attempt to forget their misery and steep their senses in forgetfulness. The French officers among us seldom indulged in drinking to excess. Our men said they kept sober in order to strip the boozy sailor of his money by gambling.

While the Frenchmen keep sober, the American and English sailor will indulge in their favorite grog. In this respect I see no difference between English and American. Over the can of grog the English tar forgets all his hardships and his slavery—yes, *slavery;* for where is there a greater slavery among white men than that of impressed Englishmen on board of one of their own men of war? The American, over his grog, seems equally happy, and equally forgetful of his harsh treatment. The Englishman, when his skin is full of grog, glows with idolatry for his country and his favorite lass; and so does the American. The former sings the victories of Benbow, Howe, Jervis, and Nelson; while the latter sing the same songs, only substituting the names of Preble, Hull, Decatur, and Bainbridge, Perry and Macdonough. Our men parodied all the English national songs: *"Rule Britannia, rule the waves,"* was *"Rule Columbia,"* &c. *"God save Great George our King,"* was sung by our boys, *"God save great Madison";* for every thing like Federalism was banished from our hearts and ears; whatever we were before, we were all staunch Madisonians in a foreign land. The two great and ruling passions among the British sailors and the American sailors seemed precisely the same, viz. *love of their country,* and *love of the fair sex.* These two subjects alone entered into all their songs, and seemed to be the only dear objects of their souls, when half drunk. On these two strings hang all our nation's

glory; while, to my surprize, I found, or thought I found, that the love of money was that string which vibrated oftenest in a Frenchman's heart; but I may be mistaken; all the nation may not be gamblers. Remember, politicians, philosophers, admirals, and generals, that *Love* and *Patriotism* are the two and I almost said the only two passions of that class of men who are destined to carry your flag in triumph around the terraqueous globe, by skillfully controlling the powers of the winds, and of *vapor.*

One word more before I quit this national trait. The English naval muse, which I presume must be a Mermaid, half woman and half fish, has, by her simple, and half the time nonsensical songs, done more for the British flag than all her gunnery or naval discipline and tactics. This inspiration of the *tenth* muse, with libations of *grog,* have actually made the English believe they were invincible on the ocean, and what is still more extraordinary the French and Spaniards were made to believe it also. This belief constituted a magical circle that secured their ships from destruction, until two American youth, *Isaac Hull* from Connecticut, and *Oliver H. Perry* from Rhode Island, broke this spell by the thunder of their cannon, and annihilated the delusion. Is not this business of *national songs* a subject of some importance? *Love* and *Patriotism,* daring amplification, with here and there a dash of the supernatural, are all that is requisite in forming this national band of naval music. We all know that *Yankee Doodle* is the favorite national tune of America, although it commenced with the British officers and Tories, in derision, in the year 1775. When that animating tune is struck up in our theatres, it electrifies the pit and the upper galleries. When our soldiers are marching to that tune they "tread the air." "With that tune," said Gen. M——,[1] the same gallant officer who took nine pieces of cannon from the British, planted on an eminence, at the battle of Bridgewater—"with that tune, these fellows would follow me into hell, and pull the Devil

[1] General James Miller, Colonel of the 21st Infantry. The battle was that of Lundy's Lane.

by the nose." For want of native compositions, we had sung British songs until we had imbibed their spirit, and the feelings and sentiments imbibed in our youth are apt to stick to us through life. It is high time we had new songs put in our mouths.

Unless we attend to the effects of these early impressions, it is almost incredible, the number of false notions that we imbibe and carry to our graves. A considerable party in the United States have sung Nelson's victories, until those victories seemed to be their own. Even on the day of the celebration of the Peace, the following Ode was sung in the hall of the University of Cambridge. It was written by the son of the keeper of the State Prison, in Massachusetts.

ODE, &c

COLUMBIA and Britannia
Have ceased from Warfare wild;
No more in battle's rage they meet,
The parent and the child.
Each gallant nation now lament
The heroes who have died.
*But the brave, on the wave,*
*Shall yet in friendship ride,*
*To bear* BRITANNIA'S *ancient name,*
*And swell* COLUMBIA'S *pride.*

The flag-staff of COLUMBIA
Shall be her mountain Pine;
Her Commerce on the foaming sea
Shall be her golden mine.
Her wealth from every nation borne,
Shall swell the ocean wide,
*And the brave, on the wave,* &c. &c.

To Britain's *Faith* and *Prowess,*
Shall distant nations bow,
The *Cross* upon her topmast head,
The *Lion* at her prow.

No haughty foe shall dare insult,
No *infidel* deride;
*For the brave, on the wave,* &c. &c.

For now the *kindred* nations
Shall wage the fight no more;
No more in dreadful thunder dash
The billows to the shore:
Save when in firm alliance bound
Some common foe defied;
*Then the brave, on the wave,* &c. &c.

This captivity in a foreign land has been to me a season of thoughtfulness. Sometimes I thought I was like a despised Jew, among the sons of the modern Babylon, which I might have sunk under but for the first principles of a serious education; for I was born and educated in the state of Massachusetts, near an hundred miles from Boston. The subject of education has greatly occupied my mind, and I rejoiced that I was born in that part of the United States where it is most attended to. It is an injury to our national character that most of the books we read in early life were written by Englishmen; as with their knowledge we imbibe their narrow prejudices. The present war has, in a degree, corrected this evil, but time alone can effect all we wish.

A dispute arose between us and our commander, relative to the article of bread, which served to show Englishmen how tenacious we Americans are on what we consider to be our rights.

Whenever the contractor omitted to send us off soft bread, provided the weather did not forbid, said contractor forfeited half a pound of bread to each man. The prisoners were not acquainted with this rule, until they were informed of it by the worthy Captain Hutchinson; and they determined to enforce the regulation on the next act of delinquency of the contractor. This opportunity soon occurred. The contractor omitted to send us off soft bread in fair weather; our commander, Mr. O. thereupon ordered us to be

served with hard ship-bread. This we declined accepting, and contended that the contractor was bound to send us off the soft bread, with an additional half pound, which he forfeited to us for his breach of punctuality. Now the contractor had again and again incurred this forfeiture, which went into Mr. O's pocket instead of our stomachs, and this mal-practice we were resolved to correct. Our commander then swore from the teeth outwards that if we refused his hard bread, we should have none; and we swore from the teeth, inwardly, that we would adhere to our first declaration and maintain our rights. Finding us obstinate he ordered us all to be driven into the pound by the marines, and the ladder drawn up. Some of the prisoners, rather imprudently, cast some reflections on Mr. O. and his family; in consequence of which he ordered us all to be driven below and the hatches closed upon us; and he represented to the Commodore that the prisoners were in a state of mutiny. He was so alarmed that he sent the female part of his family on shore for safety, and requested a reinforcement of marines. At the same time we made a representation to the commodore, and stated our grievances in our own way, and we demanded the extra half pound of soft bread, forfeited by the contractor. In all this business we were as fierce and as stubborn, and talked as big as a combination of collegians to redress bad commons. We remained in this situation two days; one from each mess going on deck for a supply of water was all the intercourse we had with our superiors. During all this time, we found we had got hold of the heaviest end of the timber. We found it very hard contending against increasing hunger, and should have been very glad of a few hard biscuit. Some began to grow slack in their resistance; and even the most obstinate allowed their ire to cool a little. To lay such an embargo on our own bowels was, be sure, a pretty tough piece of self-denial; for we found, in all our sufferings, that bread was literally the staff of life. We were about taking the general opinion by a vote, whether it was best to eat hard biscuit or starve? Just as we were about taking this important vote, in which I suspect we should have been

unanimous, the Commodore and Capt. Hutchinson came on board to inquire into the cause of the dispute; and this lucky and well timed visit saved our credit, and established the Yankee character for inflexibility beyond all doubt or controversy. These two worthy gentlemen soon discovered that Mr. O. had made representations not altogether correct. They therefore ordered the hatches to be taken off and proper bread to be served out, and so the dispute ended.

What added to our present satisfaction was that Mr. my Lord Beasly was to allow us two pence half-penny sterling per day, for coffee, tobacco, &c. We now, to use the sailor's own expressive phrase, looked up one or two points nearer the wind than ever.

This Mr. O. had been in the royal navy from his infancy, and now, at the age of 45, ranks no higher than a lieutenant. He once commanded a sloop, and had the character of severity. He had an amiable wife and many children, who lived in the prison ship. Lieut. O. was not the wisest man in all England. He exercised his cunning in making money out of his station, but he was under the immediate control of two honorable gentlemen, otherwise we should have felt more instances of his revenge than he dared at all times show.

## CHAPTER VI

IT is now the last day of February, 1814. The severity of an English winter, which is generally milder than the winters of New England, is past; and we are as comfortable as can be expected on board a prison ship; we have a few cents a day to buy coffee, sugar or tobacco; add to these we have the luxury of newspapers, which is a high gratification to the well known curiosity of a genuine Yankee, by which cant term we always mean a New England man. We have been laughed at by the British travellers for our insatiable curiosity; but such should remember, that their great moralist, Johnson, tells us that curiosity is the thirst of the soul, and is a never-failing mark of a vigorous intellect. The Hottentot has no curiosity—the woolly African has no curiosity—the vacant-minded Chinese has no curiosity—but the brightest sons of Old England and New are remarkable for it; insomuch that they are often the dupes of it. How many thousand guineas a year are acquired by artful foreigners, in feeding this appetite of our relation, the renowned *John Bull?* and yet he is never satisfied; his mouth is open still, and so wide, very lately, that Bonaparte had like to have been swallowed up by it, suite and all!

We should have taken, perhaps, more satisfaction in the perusal of these newspapers had they not been so excessively expensive. We took the *Statesman,* the *Star,* and *Bell's Weekly Messenger;* and some part of the time the *Whig.* The expense of the *Statesman* was defrayed by the sale of green fish to the contractor. The *Star* was taken by the Frenchmen; the *Whig* and *Bell's Weekly Messenger,* by individuals. We paid twenty-eight shillings sterling per month, for the *Statesman,* which is twice the price of a newspaper in Boston for a whole year. Besides, it cost us sixteen shillings per month to get these papers conveyed on board. The reader will probably say, in the language of Dr. Franklin's allegory,

that considering our destitute condition, "we paid dear for our whistle." These newspapers were smuggled, or pretended to be smuggled; our commander's pocket was not the lighter for New England *"quidnuncism."* [1] But every day afforded instances of meanness; scraping misery to the bone, for a few pence.

The United States is the region of all regions of the earth for newspapers. *There are more newspapers printed in the United States, than in all the rest of the world besides.* We do not mean a greater number of copies of the same title, but a greater number of different titles; insomuch that invention is nearly exhausted to afford them new names. In England newspapers pay a very high tax; in America they are perfectly free, and their transport by the mails is nearly so; and this is because our government, that is to say the *people,* consider newspapers one of the necessaries of a Yankee's life. In the definition of a New England man you should always insert that he is *"a go-to-meeting animal,* and *a newspaper reading animal!"* The sums which we poor prisoners paid for one English newspaper a year would have paid the board of a man in the interior of our own plentiful country.

I thought that at this time we were as happy, or as free from misery, as at any time since our captivity. The pleasant season was advancing, the days growing longer and the nights shorter, and our condition seemed improving, when a dreadful calamity broke out upon us; I mean the *Small pox.* There are no people on the face

[1] "Quids," in U. S. history from 1805-11, a section of the Democratic-Republican party which was attached to extreme States' Rights and democratic views, and separated itself from the administration, under the leadership of John Randolph, favoring Monroe as successor to Jefferson; supposed to have been so named as being "tertium quid," to the Federalists and administration republicans. Also called "Quiddists."—*Century Dictionary.*

In his next speech he avowed himself to be no longer a Republican; he belonged to the third party, the Quiddists or Quids, being that tertium quid, that third something, which had no name, but was really an Anti-Madison movement.

—Henry Adams: *John Randolph* II:181.

*Tertium quid*: 1. Something neither mind nor matter; especially an idea regarded as not a mere modification of the mind nor a purely external thing in itself. Hence—*2.* Something mediating between essentially opposite things.—*Century Dictionary.*

of the earth who have such a dread of this distemper as the people of New England. Their laws and their municipal regulations prove this. No person can remain in his own house with this disorder, but certain municipal officers take charge of him and convey him to the small pox hospital, provided by the laws for the reception of such patients. If the disorder has progressed so far as to render it, in the opinion of physicians, dangerous to life to remove him, then the street where he lives is fenced up, and a guard placed so that no one can pass, and a red flag hoisted on the house. These formidable precautions may have added to the dread of this loathsome disease.

When this alarming distemper first appeared in the ship, the surgeon had all the prisoners mustered, to inquire of them who had had the small pox, and who the *kine* pock; or, as they call it in England, the *cow* pock. He vaccinated a number. But there were several instances of persons who said they were inoculated with the kine pock in America, who took the small pox the natural way at this time. I do not consider this as in any degree diminishing the value of this important discovery and practice. Very few practitioners understand this business, and a great number of people in the United States have inoculated themselves, without knowing at what period to take the matter, and without knowing the true pustule from the spurious. Many of our prisoners absolutely refused to be vaccinated, although they believed in its efficacy of guarding them from small pox. I was greatly surprized at this, until I found that they felt no disposition to preserve their lives any longer. It seemed that their misery had so far lessened their attachment to life, that they were indifferent as to any method of preserving it. I was surprized to find this in some who I had considered as among the most cheerful. I was shocked to find among these a weight of woe I little expected. Several of them told me that life was a burthen; that pride of character kept them from whining, and forced a smile on their countenance, while

their being penned up like so many dirty hogs had chilled their souls, and sunk them, at times, into despondency. Some said that nothing but the hope of revenge kept them alive.

There are two extremes of the mind producing a disregard for life. The one is, the fever or delirium of battle, augmented and kept up by the cannon's roar, the sight of blood, and military music; here a man, being all soul, thinks nothing of his body. The other case is, where his body is debilitated, his spirit half extinguished and his soul desponding, and his body paralyzed. Here existence is a burden, and the attachment to life next to nothing. It is here that death appears to open the gate of the prison. I found, to my surprize, that several of our countrymen were in that desponding state.

Some refused to be vaccinated, from a persuasion that the kine pock was no security against the small pox. When I endeavored to convince several of them of their error, one asked me if a weak man could drive away a strong one, or a small evil drive away a great one? A man need not despair in making a certain class of people believe any thing but truth.

It is surprizing that when our countryman Dr. Waterhouse,[1] first introduced this new inoculation into America, in the year 1800, what an opposition the practice met with; and nothing but the most persevering and unwearied exertions, and public experiments, could overcome the reluctance in numbers to receive this great blessing. The same perversity of judgment was observable among individuals in this prison-ship.

As the spring advanced, the men, contrary to my expectation, became more desponding, and the Typhus fever, or rather the *jail fever,* appeared among them. From four to six are taken down with it every day. We have about nine hundred men on

[1] Dr. W. is here speaking impersonally.

board this ship; eight hundred of us wretched prisoners, and one hundred Englishmen. We are more crowded than is consistent with health or comfort. Our hammocks are slung one above another. It is warm and offensive in the middle of our habitation; and those who have hammocks near the ports are unwilling to have them open in the night. All this impedes the needful circulation of fresh air. It is a little singular, that it is the robust and hearty that are seized with this fever, before those who are weak in body, and apparently desponding in mind.

As the appropriate hospital-ship is now crowded with sick, we are obliged to retain a number in the *Crown Prince*. The sick bay of this ship is now arranged like to an hospital ship; and the hospital allowance served out; and the chief surgeon visits us every week. Our committee, composed of the oldest and most respectable men amongst us, do everything in their power to keep the ship and the prisoners clean. Men are appointed to inspect the prisoners' clothes and bedding; and even to punish those who refused or were too indolent to wash themselves and their clothing; for there were some who were more like hogs than men; such is the effect of situation and circumstances. Our most influential men set the example of cleanliness, and endeavoured to instill into the minds of others the great importance of being free from all kinds of filth.

It is now the first day of April, 1814, and the small pox and typhus fever still prevails in the different ships, especially on board the ship called the *Bahama*. One hundred and sixty-one Americans were put on board her in the month of January. She had been used as a prison for Danish sailors, many of whom were sick of typhus fever. These Americans came, like the rest of us, from Halifax; being weak, weary, fatigued and half-starved, their dejected spirits and debilitated bodies were aptly disposed to imbibe the contagion. Accordingly soon after they went on board, they were attacked with it. All the Danes are sent out of her; and her upper deck is converted into an hospital; and the surgeon has

declared the ship to be infectious; and no one communicates with her but such as supply the ship and attend the sick.

While *"sick and imprisoned,"* Mr. Beasly visited us *not;* but sent his clerk, a Mr. Williams, to supply the most needy with clothes; and instead of applying to the committee, who could have informed him correctly who most needed them, he adopted the mode most liable to lead to deception and injustice. This Mr. B. seems from the beginning to have considered his countrymen as a set of cheating, lying, swindling rascals; and a mutual contempt has existed between them. We wish all our officers and agents would bear in mind this fact, that complacency begets complacency; and contempt begets contempt.

We Americans have seen and severely felt the highly pernicious and demoralizing tendency of *gambling,* and we have been long wishing to break up the practice; and our selectmen, or committee, were determined to effect it. We accordingly took a vote, agreeably to the custom of our country, and it was found to be the will of the majority to prohibit the practice of it. We began with the roulette table, or as our men called them, "wheels of fortune." After no small opposition from the French officers we succeeded in putting them down; but we could not succeed so easily against the billiard tables. It was contended by many that it was an exercise, and a trial of skill; and if confined to a half-penny, or one cent a game, it could not be dangerous to the morals or property of the community. On this a warm and long dispute arose, in defining gambling. The playing of billiards for a cent a game was contended to be a muscular exercise, and not gambling; whereas cards were denounced as a studied, sedentary contrivance for the artful to draw money from the pockets of the artless.

The owners of "the wheels of fortune" were, perhaps, envied. They made money and lived better than the rest, and the same re-

mark was made of the owners of the billiard tables. In the course of debate they were tauntingly called the *privileged order,* and rising from one degree of odious epithet to another, I could not help laughing, on hearing one angry orator pronounce this scheme of screwing money out of the pockets of the artless and then laughing at their poverty and distress, to be down right FEDERALISM. Now it should be known that a *Federalist* and *Federalism* are the most odious ideas that can be raised up in the minds of every American prisoner in this river. A law was, therefore, proposed, to fine any American prisoner who should call another a *Federalist.*

This state of contention continued five or six days; when I am sorry to say it the gambling party increased rather than lessened. At length two of the party ventured to recommence gambling—one of them was immediately sent for by the committee, who ordered him to be confined in the *Black Hole.* This lit up a blaze the committee little contemplated. The whole body of the commons cried out against this summary and arbitrary proceeding. This was pronounced to be such an alarming attack on the liberty of the prisoners, that every freeman in the prison-ship was called upon to rise up and resist the daring encroachment on the birthright of an American. A strong party was at once formed in favor of the man who was imprisoned without a trial. On this occasion the names of *Hampden, Sidney,* and *Wilkes,* were echoed from all quarters of our prison. The liberty of the citizen, and false imprisonment were descanted on in a loud and moving manner. Some talked of a writ of *habeas corpus,* but others knew not what it meant; but all agreed that it was unconstitutional to confine a man in prison without trial. One man had the imprudence to say that they would have French fashions among them, of imprisoning and hanging a man, and trying him afterwards. This roused the ire of some of the officers of that nation, who declared in a rage that it was not the fashion in France to hang a man and

try him afterwards. They all agreed, however, that it was an illegal act to confine the man without trial; and that this was a precedent dangerous to the liberties of the prisoner, and that they ought to protest against it. This was a curious scene to the surgeon, and some other pretty sensible English officers; one of whom observed to another, in my hearing, "these Americans are certainly the most singular set of men I ever met with." The man who had been confined was allowed to come from his confinement, and speak for himself. He had "the gift of the gab," and a species of forcible eloquence that some of our lawyers might envy. He would have distinguished himself in any of our town meetings, and with cultivation, might have shone in history. He, however, committed that very common fault among our popular orators, *he talked too much.* The President of the Committee was not much of a speaker; but he was a man of sense and prudence. Cool as he was, he was thrown a little off his guard by an intemperate phrase of the culprit; who, in the ardor of his defence, accused the President of being a *Federalist;* and this turned the current of favor against the unguarded orator, and he was from all sides, hissed. When quiet was restored the President took advantage of the current just turned in his favor, and said, "Fellow Prisoners! I perceive that I have committed an error in confining this man without a previous trial, and I am sorry for it. At the time, I thought I was doing right, but I now see that I was wrong." He then proposed to have the accused regularly tried, before the full committee, which he hoped would prove themselves the real representatives of the community, collected in course of events within the planks of an enemy's prison ship. He exhorted the committee not to be influenced by party, prejudice, or local attachment, but to act justly and independently. The accused was allowed to speak for himself. He was not an old Jack Tar, but the son of a respectable New England yeoman, with a clear head and not destitute of learning, nor was he ignorant of the law. He defended himself with real ability, and the spirit of Emmet spoke

within him. Among others things, he said—"What have I done to bring down upon me the resentment of the committee, and the vengeance of its President? In attempting to establish the rights of this little community, I have suffered the ignominy of a close confinement, by the order of my own countrymen. While we are suffering oppression, degradation and insult from the external enemy, shall we redouble our misery, by wrongfully oppressing one another? I thought it my duty to exert myself in favor of an equality of rights among us. I could not bear to hear the domineering language, and see the overbearing conduct of the purse-proud among us; of a set of cunning, tricking, sleight-of-hand men, who were constantly stripping the unwary and artless American of the small sums he had acquired, not by gaming, but by labor and good behaviour. I was an enemy to all this; but I was a friend to the freedom of judgment, and the freedom of action, provided it did not injure the whole. If after what has been experienced, our countrymen will gamble with certain Frenchmen, above the rank of common seamen, let them do it and endure the consequences. It is wrong to attempt to abridge the liberty of amusement, if that amusement does not harm, or endanger the comfort of the whole." The man was acquitted, and escorted to his berth in triumph.

It is surprising what trifling things will influence a crowd! A few minutes previous to this man's bold harangue, every one, almost, was against him; but as soon as he tickled their ears with a flourishing speech, where much more ability was shewn than was expected, instantly they clap their hands, admire his talents, applaud his sentiments and think directly contrary to what they did five minutes before. From this incident have I been seriously impressed with the dangerous effects of eloquence. Here this man made "the worse appear the better reason." But how many instances have we of the same effect in the Grecian, Roman, English and French history!

This trial, and this specimen of oratory, convinced me that Liberty is the parent of eloquence. I have noticed a striking difference between our men and those of England, with all their loud talk of English freedom. When an American speaks to an officer set over him, he utters all that he has to say in a ready and fearless manner; but when these Englishmen come on board of us to bring vegetables, or any thing else to dispose of, they stand with their caps off, scratching their heads, through awe and embarrassment; and every other word is, "Yes, your Honor," or, "Will your Honor have this, or your Honor have that; and "your Honor knows best;" and all such mean and slavish language. It is remarkable that you never hear this sort of language, and see this servile manner, in the common savages of our wilderness. It belongs only to the common people, and I am told, to the shopkeepers of England, and to our negroes. Necessity first inspires the poor with awe for the rich, and by and by it grows into a principle.

A day or two after these transactions we resumed the consideration of the practice of gambling, and we turned the tables against the billiard players; and they were taken down by an almost unanimous consent; whatever some individuals thought or wished, the general opinion was so strong that they dare not express it. The authority of the committee and the authority of the President, were established more firmly than ever.

While writing down these occurrences, I have thought that we might here see the great characters and the important doings of the Grecian, Roman and American Republics, in a very small compass. Here we saw the struggles of vice and virtue, wisdom and folly, and the desire of distinction, and the ambition of taking the lead, and the little workings of emulation, amid rags and tatters. As often as I moaned over wearied moments of captivity, I do not think the time entirely lost to me. I learnt a great deal. I saw

close to them the first workings of those springs which set republics, kingdoms, empires, and armies in motion; the winds and tides, without which, the great ocean of human life would stagnate, and all within its vast bounds would perish—until now, I saw the human heart covered over by pride, encrusted by avarice or cloaked round by hypocrisy; I now saw it exposed, naked and bare, to the inspection of each man's neighbour.

There are among us Americans on board this prison ship, some men of sense and principle; but there are many more, especially among the soldiery, some of the lowest of the American community; the very dregs of the American people. They are lazy, dirty, lying, and profligate; and yet they are total strangers to some of the worst vices of these Frenchmen. But I forbear to enlarge, and shall quit this odious subject by wishing that all young Americans may stay at home, and if possible, never mix with these veterans in vice, who inhabit what is called the old world. Next to the French, I believe the Irish the next in vicious actions. An Irishman appears to have more spirit than brains. There are only two situations in which an Irishman seems perfectly happy, viz. when he has plenty of liquor to drink, and a number of friends to give it to; and perhaps we may add, when he is wrangling in a mob. They are amiable, yet bloody; they have the noblest feelings, with savage hearts. Their passions have the most rapid transitions, so that they will hug a man one minute, and the next knock him on the head. I speak only from my observations in this confined place.—With the same limitation I speak of the Portuguese and Spaniards, a few of whom are here among us. They are rattlesnakes; shining, glossy, malignant and revengeful beyond any fellows I ever met with. They are void, however, of one virtue of our rattlesnakes; they will stab a man to the heart without giving him any warning. I have charitably supposed that when in a violent passion, they are bereft of reason, and become entirely insane. My observations, however, like my remarks on

Frenchmen are confined to the narrow space of this floating prison. We should be very cautious in making general or national censures. I have suspected whether among the Roman Catholics, the practice of confession and absolution had not opened a door for some horrid crimes, such as murder. It may be too, that they look upon us, Protestants, as the Mahomedans do the Christians, a sort of outcasts, the killing of whom amounts not to the horrid sin of murder. It is certain that some of these people have been known to plunge a knife into a man with no more compunction than an Englishman or an American would use his fist.

## CHAPTER VII

*APRIL 30th,* 1814.—The good effects of the abolition of all the apparatus of gambling were more and more apparent. Those who were heretofore employed merely in rattling of the dice and shuffling of cards, were now occupied in matters more becoming a rational and accountable being. They are now busily employed in reading, writing, drawing, and in studying arithmetic and navigation. Our ship begins to wear the appearance of a seminary of learning; for we have established numerous schools in various parts of the ship; and there appears a strong desire for improvement among the younger class of the prisoners. Every one is now convinced of the pernicious effects of gambling. In order to improve this praiseworthy disposition, the committee, which is in fact a board of selectmen, applied to the agent, Mr. Beasly, for stationery; he accordingly sent us a ream of writing paper, a few slates, and a few copies of a small treatise on arithmetic. His supply was by no means equal to our needs. Four times the number would have been in constant use; for it checked the emulation of some when they could not obtain what they wished.

It was pleasing to see a number of quite young men preferring education to gaming, noise and uproar; not but what we had among us a set of noisy, thoughtless, giggling idle fellows, mere drums, that sounded loud by reason of their emptiness. I never was so thoroughly convinced of the great importance of a good education, grounded on sound and serious principles, as since I have formed one among this congregation of wretchedness. I fear I shall betray my partiality if I should candidly write down my observations on this subject. We Americans are taught from our infancy not only to believe, but to think, compare and hold fast that which we find to be good. It seems to me that the Roman

Catholic religion takes all the trouble of thinking and examining from off the mind of their believers. It is a scheme of rules and discipline not very unlike that of the military, and its punishments horrible. The Episcopal church of England treads close upon the heels of the papal, and has formed a system all cut and dried, like the Catholic, for a man to believe and be saved. Both of them make religion a stationary point, and not a motive of principle, forever progressing to perfection. One never dares to think or speak beyond the bounds of that common prayer book, established by the king and his council: whereas an American reads or hears read the Bible from his infancy, and thereby acquires a freedom of thinking unknown even to the generality of Englishmen. I should never have thought so much on these subjects had I not remarked the difference of thinking, and behavior of the different people here crouded together. I do not presume to say which is best or which is worst; I can only say which is the freest from bigotry, and which is least trammelled by ordinances merely political.

The ragged and despised legislators of the *Crown Prince* prison ship, in solemn council between decks convened, never adopted a wiser measure than that of breaking up the dangerous habit of gambling. I had an idea that gaming often become the ruling passion; but I never before had an idea of its fascinating power. Some of our crew, of reputed good habits, became so bewitched with gaming that they plundered their companions and returned to their cards and wheels of fortune with a serious and anxious ardor, totally void of pleasantry, that seemed to me to border upon insanity.

After the gaming tables were demolished, some of our companions amused themselves by running and tumbling and scampering about the ship, disturbing those who were disposed to read, write and study navigation. Not content with this they halloaed, ridiculed and insulted people passing in vessels and boats up and

down the river. The commander had no small difficulty in putting a stop to this disgraceful river-slang.

On receiving a month's pay from Mr. Beasly, our agent so called, every prisoner contributed threepence towards a fund for purchasing beer. They formed themselves into classes, like our collegians, and these appointed persons to sell it to those who wished for it; and each member of the class shared his proportion of the profits. This answered a very good purpose; it checked the monopolizers and muck-worms that infested our ship and fattened on our wastefulness. It also benefitted those who did not choose to drink beer, or porter, as they call it in England.

Some disagreeable and very mortifying occurrences took place among us in the course of this spring. Four of our men agreed together to go on to the quarter-deck and offer themselves to the commander, to enter into the service of the British. Their intention was discovered before they had an opportunity of putting it in execution. Two of them were caught and two escaped. These two were arraigned and sentenced to be marked with the letter T, with India ink, pricked into their foreheads, being the initial of the word *Traitor;* after which one went aft and entered; the other judged better, and remained with his countrymen. Had these been Englishmen we should have applauded them; and had they been Irishmen, we had no right to blame them; but we had the mortification to know that they were by birth Americans. Some thought the punishment was too severe, and which we had no right to inflict; others thought that the letter in their foreheads should have been F, for *Federalist;* for this was the name they ever afterwards were known by.

The Frenchmen were now (in the month of May) leaving the reach. Many of them had been in prison since 1803. These men are going home to live under a government forced upon them by foreigners! How unlike Americans, who had rather perish un-

der tortures. Our Frenchmen always spoke in raptures of the Emperor NAPOLEON, and with contempt of *Louis*. When we spoke in praise of Bonaparte, they would throw their arms around us, and cry out "one bon American!" But these men are all passion and no principle; they are fit for any thing but liberty. I cannot judge of the whole nation; but those I have seen here are an abandoned set of men. I dare not write down their incredible vices. There has been a great cry of *French influence* by the British party in New England. I never thought it ever existed, and I am very certain that it never will exist, unless they and we should become a very altered people. It is a happy circumstance that the wide Atlantic rolls between us and France, and between us and England.

LOUIS XVIII passed through Chatham this month for France. The tops of the carriages, only, were to be seen by the prisoners. On this occasion the cannon were firing from London to Sheerness. Our Frenchmen looked blacker than ever. They were, be sure, obliged to stick the white cockade on their hats, but they told us they had Bonaparte's cockade in their hearts. They check the expression of their feelings, lest it should retard their liberation.

On the news of taking of Paris and of the flight of Bonaparte to Elba, all our prison-keepers were alive for joy. "Thank God that I am an *Englishman,*" says our commander, Lieut. O.—and "thank God I am a *Briton,*" says our surgeon, who is a Scotchman. John Bull is now on the very top of the steeple, huzzaing and swinging his hat, and crying out to the whole universe, *"I'm thinking Johnny Bull,* the magnanimous John Bull, the soul of the Continental war, the protector of France, the restorer of his holiness the Pope and of Ferdinand the Great, the terror and admiration of the whole world. I have nothing now left me to do but to flog the Yankees and depose MADISON, and burn the city of Washington, disperse the Congress, establish in their place the

*Hartford Convention* and raise Caleb Strong to the high rank his devotion merits. After this, I will divide the world between me and—. But first, I will read these dispatches from Sir George Prevost, who is beyond doubt at this very moment at the city of Hartford, in Connecticut, or at the city of Northhampton, the capital of my province of Massachusetts."

John Bull [1] is, be sure, an hearty fellow with some very good points in his character; but dwelling on an island, he ofttimes betrays an ignorance of the world and of himself, so that we cannot help laughing at him once in a while, for his conceitedness. His ignorance of America and Americans is a source of ridicule among us all. An English lady said to one of the officers who had the care of American prisoners in England: "I hear, Sir, that the Americans are very ingenious in the manufacture of many little articles, and should like to have some of them." The officer replied that she might herself give directions to some of the Americans, whom he would direct to speak with her. "O," said she, "how can that be, *I cannot speak their language!*" The individuals of the navy of England have pretty correct ideas of us; but the soldiery of England have betrayed their ignorance in a manner that is astonishing, and sometimes truly laughable, even among their officers who have taken prisoners. To this ignorance of free and happy America, and to the very generally diffused blessings of a respectable education, which we all enjoy, is to be attributed the base treatment we have experienced in some periods of our painful captivity. Who could have entertained any respect, or good opinion of a set of miserable looking, half naked, dirty men, such as we all were when we arrived in the different ships from America? Our own parents, our brothers and sisters, would not have recognized us as their relatives. The soldiers taken under Boestler, were the veriest looking vagabonds I ever saw. They resembled more the idea I have formed of the lowest

[1] Our youngest readers need not be told, that by John Bull, we mean the English nation personified. See Dean Swift's admirable history of John Bull, his wife, and his mother.

tenants of St. Giles', than American citizens, born and bred up in a sort of Indian freedom and living all their lives in plenty, and never knowing, until they came into the hands of the English, what it was to be pinched for food or to be infested by vermin. This short, severe, and for America most glorious war, has given all ranks of the British nation more correct ideas of that people, who have vanquished them in every contest, the ill-omened frigate *Chesapeake* alone excepted. During this short war, the British have learnt this important truth, that the Americans are a brave and skilful people who, though they appear to differ among themselves, *are all united against any attack from the English;* and on our side we have learnt that to carry on a war as we have done is *very expensive.*

The surgeon of this ship, who is a clever Scotchman, speaks of the English nation as in a state of starvation in the midst of her great power, and abounding wealth and matchless glory; for the late capture of Paris by the English, with a trifling assistance of the Allies, has absolutely intoxicated the whole nation, so that every man of them talks as if he were drunk. He told me, "that although the ship carpenters at Chatham received two guineas a week, (which by the way is not so much as our carpenters receive in America) they were always poor, and could lay up nothing against the accidents of sickness, but that when such misfortunes came upon them, they, in common with the manufacturers of England, with their families, went upon the parish or into some hospitals." He said, "such laboring people laid out too much of their money in flesh meat and in porter, which was not the custom in Scotland; and that there it was considered an indelible disgrace to a family to be maintained by the parish, but that it was so common in England that no disgrace was attached to it. We in Scotland, (said he) would work our hands off before any of our family should ask the parish for assistance to live." He talked much about the poor laws, and the taxes to support the vast num-

ber of the poor in England. I told him that in Massachusetts, which contained about half a million of people, we had not more than a thousand persons maintained at the public charge; and that this thousand included foreigners—English, Scotch, Irish, Germans, Danes, Swedes and not a few negroes. He seemed surprised at this account, but after a little pause he said, "it was just like Scotland, where they had very few poor; and of those very few were so degraded in mind as to go into an alms-house."

The Doctor observed "that the English were full of money; that they give large and long credit, and that tailors, shoe-makers and hatters gave a generous credit, and could afford so to do." He said "that the *'capitalists'* ruled and turned the wheels of the government at their will and pleasure; they have great influence in the nation, but they have no ancestors nor any thing to boast of but their money, which gives them all their consequence; for it is true if they shut their purses, the whole machinery of the government must stop. I could have told this discontented Caledonian a different story. I could have told him that all our capitalists, merchants and monied men, especially in New England, had shut their purses against our administration, and yet in spite of these detestable sons of mammon, our governmental machine went steadily on, while we vanquished our enemy by land and by sea; but I did not wish to mortify a civil, friendly man. "In England," continued he, "the merchant governs the cabinet; and the cabinet governs the parliament; and the sovereign governs both; but (said he) the capitalists, (by which he meant the mercantile interest) govern the whole." I did not choose to controvert his opinions; but, "thinks-I-to-my-self," ah! Sawney, thou art mistaken; America, democratic America, has proved that the most Democratical government upon the terraqueous globe has gone steadily on to greatness, to victory and to glory, with the capitalists or mercantile interest in direct opposition to its wondrous measures!

I believe that our surgeon was a good man and not ill qualified in his profession, but no politician, and pretty strongly attached to his tribe; who, from his account, never spent much money in buying meat and strong beer. He talked much of the machine and wheels of government; from all which I concluded, that the court of St. James was the hub, or nave, where all the spokes of the great wheel of the machine terminated; and that the laboring people, manufacturers and merchants were doomed, all their days to grease this wheel. It is remarkable that David, the royal Psalmist, among the severest of the curses of his enemies expressly says, *"Lord, make them like unto a wheel."*

## CHAPTER VIII

THE month of April, which is just past, is like our April in New England, raw, cold, or as the English call it, *sour*. But their month of May, which is now arrived, is pleasanter by far than ours. By all that I can observe I conclude that the vernal season of this part of the Island of Britain is full fifteen days, if not twenty, earlier than that of Boston. I conjecture that this spot corresponds with Philadelphia.

The Medway, though a small river in the eyes of an inhabitant of the New World, is a very pleasant one. The moveable picture on its surface, of ships, tenders, and barges, is very pleasing, while its banks are rich and beautiful. Oh what a contrast to horrid Nova-Scotia, with her barren hills, and everlasting bleak mountains!—The picture from the banks of the river to the top of the landscape is truly delightful, and beyond any thing I ever saw in my own country, and this is owing to the hedges, which are novelties in the eyes of an American. In our country the fields, meadows and pastures are divided by stone walls, or the rough post and rail fence; but here their fields, pastures and enclosures, which are very small compared with ours, are made by hedges, or living growing vegetables of a deep and most beautiful green. It gives a richness to the English landscape beyond all expression fine. How happens it, I wonder, that hedges have never been introduced into *New* England, who has copied so closely every thing belonging to *Old* England? Should I ever be permitted to leave this Babylonish captivity, and be allowed once more to see our own Canaan, the enclosures of hedge shall not be forgotten.

Nearly opposite our doleful prison stands the village of Gillingham, adorned with a handsome church; on the side next Chatham stands the castle defended by more than an hundred cannon.

These fortifications were erected soon after the Dutch republicans sailed up to Chatham and singed John Bull's beard, since which it is said, he changes countenance at the name of a republic. We are told in the history of Gillingham that here the famous Earl Goodwin murdered six hundred Norman gentlemen belonging to the retinue of Prince Alfred. But some such shocking story is told of almost every town in England that has an old castle, an old tower, or an old cathedral. This village once belonged to an Archbishop of Canterbury, vestiges of whose palace are yet to be seen. This place is also noted for making what is absurdly called *copperas,* which is the crystalized salt of iron, or what is called in the new chemical nomenclature, *sulphate of iron;* or in common parlance, *green vitriol;* which is manufactured, and found native in our own country.

Near to this village of Gillingham is a neat house with a good garden, and surrounded by trees, which was bequeathed by a lady to the oldest boatswain in the Royal Navy. The present incumbent is 80 years of age. Within our view is a shepherd attending his flock with his canine lieutenants, who drive them into their pen in the evening, just as our shepherd does us on board the *Crown Prince.* In a clear day the masts of the ships can be seen passing up and down the Thames. This brings to our minds our own gallant ships, whose decks we long once more to tread.

Britain pursues a malignant policy, in confining us in a loathsome prison. The Britons know, probably, that a long and lingering imprisonment weakens the body and diminishes the energy of the mind; that it disposes to vice, to a looseness of thought and a destruction of those moral principles inculcated by a careful and early education. Such a sink of vice I never saw, or ever dreamt of, as I have seen here. Never was a juster saying than that of "Evil communications corrupt good manners." One vicious fellow may corrupt an hundred, even if he speaks another language. I have been thoroughly convinced of the wisdom of

solitary imprisonment. By what I have seen and heard in this ship, where there are generally from seven to nine hundred men, that such collections are so many hot-beds of vice and villainy. It is a college of Satan, where degrees of wickedness are conferred *emerito.* Here we have freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors in roguery, together with Bachelors, Masters of Arts, and Doctors.

Is it not a shame and a disgrace to Christian natives, that because a man has had the virtue to step forward in the cause of his country, in the cause of free trade and sailors' rights, or from that glow of chivalry that fills a youthful bosom, or the sound of the warlike drum and trumpet and the sight of the waving flag of his insulted country; is it not a shame that such a young man of pure morals and careful education should be plunged into such an horrid prison as this, amid vice, and roguery, and every thing else debasing to the character of so moral a people as the Americans really are?

The prisoners and the commander had lived in pretty good harmony until very lately. Some of our men had absolutely cut a hole through the ship near her stern, and cut the copper all around the hole, excepting at the under side, which enabled them to bend down the copper at their pleasure and open a passage into the water, and to re-close it in such a manner as to escape detection. It was effected with a great deal of art and good management.

The first dark night after this newly contrived sternport was finished, sixteen of the prisoners passed through it into the water and swam safely on shore, notwithstanding a sentinel was stationed directly above the hole. They took care, however, to allure him as far forward as they could by singing droll songs, and handing about some grog, which had been provided for that purpose. Sixteen was thought to be as great a number as could be prudently ventured to escape at once; for one night the copper, which operated like a door upon its hinge, was considerably ruptured, and the

prisoners gave over the attempt and retired to their hammocks again.

The next evening the prisoners were to be counted; and it was of the first importance to keep up the entire number, and prevent the detection of our plot. To this end we cut a hole through one deck, big enough for one man to pass from one enclosure to the other. There was always a number of prisoners left on each deck, who were counted by the sergeant below; while the serjeant passed from the lower deck to the next above it, sixteen men slipped through the hole and were counted over again; and this deception kept the numbers good, and this trick was practised several times with success. The nights were now too light for a second attempt to escape. When they became sufficiently dark again, we prepared for a second attempt. After drawing lots for the chance, each man was provided with a little bag of cloths, plaistered over with grease to keep them water tight; they passed agreeably to lots drawn, to the hole near the stern of the ship. Two got well into the water, but one of them was tender and timid. Trepidation and the coldness of the water made him turn back to regain the hole he crept out of. In coming near the staging where the sentinel was posted, he heard the poor fellow breathe, and at length got sight of him.—"Ah," says Paddy, "here is a porpoise, and I'll stick him with my bayonet." —On which the terrified young man exclaimed—"Don't kill me, I am a prisoner." The sentinel held out his hand and helped him on to the staging, and then fired his gun to give the alarm. The guard turned out, and the officers ran down in a fright, not being able to conceive how the man could have got overboard, surrounded with a platform and guarded as this ship was. They ran here and there, and questioned and threatened and rummaged about; at length they discovered the sally-port of the enemy. The officers stood in astonishment at the sight of a hole big enough for a man to creep through, cut through the thick planking of a ship of the line. While they stared and looked pale, many of the prisoners burst out

a-laughing. None but an American could have thought and executed such a thing as this. One of the officers said he did not believe that the Devil himself would ever be able to keep these fellows in hell, if they determined on getting out!

The poor fellow who had crept out and crept back again was so chilled, or petrified with fear, that he could give the officers no account of the matter. In the meantime, muskets were fired, and a general alarm through the fleet of prison ships, fifteen in number. The river was soon covered with boats, but not a man could they find. The next day the man who escaped was found dead on the beach, where he lay two days in the sight of us all. At length a coroner's inquest was held upon him; but no one was examined by the jury, excepting the crew of the boat who first discovered him. It was said that there were bruises about his head. His ship-mates said that he was one of the best swimmers they ever knew. It was strongly suspected that he was discovered swimming, and that some of the marines knocked him on the head, in revenge for turning them out of their hammocks in the night. His clothing, his money and his watch were taken by Lieutenant *Osmore,* the commander of this prison ship. It was disgraceful to the people and to the civil authority to allow the man to lay such a long space of time, unexamined and unburied, on the shores of a Christian people.

When the prisoners were called to answer to their names, those absent were called over several times; when some of the prisoners answered that the absentees had been paroled by the commander, and gone on shore. This saucy answer enraged the commander, excited his resentment and laid the foundation for future difficulties.

I must needs say, that some of our young men treated Mr. Osmore, the first officer of this prison ship, in a manner not to be excused, or even palliated. If they did not love him or esteem him, still, as he was the legally constituted commander of this *dépôt* of

prisoners he was entitled to good manners, which he did not always receive, as the following anecdote will show. Not long after the escape of the sixteen men, our commander and his family were getting into the boat to go on shore, when a boy looked out of a port near to him and cried out *baa! baa!* This, Mr. Osmore took as an insult, and ordered the port to be shut down; but the messes that were accommodated by the light from it forced it up again. Now the origin of this ludicrous and sheep-like interjection was this: a story was in circulation that Lieut. O. had taken some sheep from the neighboring marshes without leave or license, and converted them to his own use, and that the owner being about to prosecute him the affair was made up by the interposition of friends, on compensation being made. Now it is probable that there was not a word of truth in this story; but that was the report. The commander, therefore, on finding his orders resisted by the prisoners, directed some marines to shut the port and confine it down with spikes, and ordered the sentinel to fire into the port if they forced it open again. Upon this some of the prisoners tore up a large oaken bench, with which they forced open the port and kept the bench out, so as to keep up that valve, or heavy shutter sustained on hinges, that when down closes the port hole; at the same time the sheepish note of *baa! baa! baa!* was uttered from every part of the ship, sounding like an immense flock of sheep, that might have been heard full a mile. Although none of us could help joining in the loud laugh, for laughter is contagious, the most prudent of our countrymen condemned the conduct as highly improper. It is said, if one man is determined to insult another let him do it and abide the consequences, but never insult a man in presence of his family. If we Americans are in the habit of ridiculing ribands, and garters and keys, and crowns and sceptres, and mitres and high sounding titles, let us never attempt to diminish the dignity of patriarchal rank.

The riot did not end here; for when the commander found that

he could not keep the port entirely shut, he ordered the marines to drive the prisoners off the forecastle down into the pound, which occasioned the boys to sing out as before and even to be more insulting. This he was determined to bear no longer; and he therefore drove them all below, allowing only the cooks to remain in the galley, and the caterers to go upon deck to get water from the tanks. The market boats were forbidden to come near us, and in this state of embargo we remained during two days, all the time confined merely to the government allowance of food. At length, the committee requested the commander to transmit some letters for them to the American agent for prisoners, and to the British commodore. This he could not well refuse. These two officers accordingly came down to us. They requested the president of the committee to state to them the cause and course of the dispute. Mr. Osmore stated his complaint, and the president of our committee replied, and stated ours; and among other things observed that the word *"baa"* had no more meaning than a thousand other senseless cries, uttering constantly from the throats of idle, thoughtless boys; and begged Mr. Osmore to explain how such an unmeaning sound could be construed into an insult; that if he and his officers should cry *baa! baa! baa!* all day, none of the Americans would think themselves injured or affronted. As to forcibly keeping the port open, the president observed that however offended he might be with a saucy boy, the men did not deserve to be deprived of the light of heaven, and to be confined below and reduced to a smaller allowance of food. The result was, the hatches were ordered to be taken off, and we were all restored to our former situation. Capt. Hutchinson acquired an additional stock of popularity with the prisoners for this decision in our favor. The prisoners are discriminating and not ungrateful. The sailing-master, who is a Scotchman, has always treated us with great tenderness and humanity. He has attended to our little conveniences, and forwarded our letters. Mr. Barnes never descends to little contemptible extortions; nor is he on the continual watch lest his dignity should suffer by a look,

a tone or a playful interjection. When Osmore is absent and Barnes gives orders, it is instantly and cheerfully obeyed. If there is any disorder this worthy Scotchman can, by a word, restore harmony, of which we might give many instances. In reprimanding a boy the other day, for ill behavior, he said to him, "I expect better things of you as an American; I consider you all in a different light from that of a d—d set of French monkies."

Mr. Galbreath is likewise a Scotchman; and he, too, is a very worthy man. These two worthy Caledonians operate together in alleviating our hard lot; and they do as much to please us as the jealous and revengeful disposition of some body else will admit of. We are all pretty healthy, and the hospital arrangements on board are broken up; some few remain on board the hospital ship.

Tenders are daily passing down the river, filled with seamen and marines, bound to America. As they pass by us, they play *"Yankee Doodle,"* and cry out to us that they are bound to America, to flog the Yankees. We holloa to them in return, and tell them what they will meet there, and predict to them their fate. Some of these fellows have been seven years at sea, and would desert to our colours the first opportunity. These white slaves expected to enjoy a little something like freedom, at the conclusion of the peace; but instead of setting their feet on shore, they are now sent off to leave their bones in America, without a moment's notice of their destination.

*June 30th,* 1814. Early in this month three men concealed themselves in the water tank, through the connivance of the corporal of the guard, and so escaped from prison. More would have gone off by the same conveyance, had not one of the fugitives written an ironical letter to the commander, thanking him for his tenderness, humanity and extreme kindness, and foolishly acquainting him with the method he took to effect his escape; and this led to his recapture. Another fellow had the address to conceal himself in an

old worn-out copper, that was sent to the dock to be exchanged for a new one. This man got safe out of the copper, but he found himself as bad off in the dock as in the prison ship. After roving and rambling around the dock, he was taken up by the guard, and rather than be sent on board a man of war, he confessed that he had broke out of the prison ship; and he was immediately brought back to his former companions.

A rage exists for cutting holes through the wood work and copper of the ship; but no one has succeeded in escaping through them. The holes were always discovered as the men were ready to enter the breach, which led us to suspect that we have secret informers among our crew, perhaps some Irish, Dane or Dutchman.

A most daring attempt to escape was made on board the commodore's ship, the *Irresistible,* by four American prisoners. It is worth relating for its boldness; for it was in the open day, when all eyes were upon them. The jolly-boat lay near the stairs, with her oars in, under the care of a sentry. Notwithstanding she was thus guarded four brave Americans resolved to seize her in spite of musketry, and row on shore and run for it. One of them was from Rhode Island, being an Indian of the Narraganset tribe; he was a man of large stature and remarkable strength; and it was agreed that he should lead the way, in the bold enterprize. This stout man, whose name I wish I could remember, saw, as he thought, a favorable moment, and went down the side of the ship, followed by three others; he seized the sentry and, in a moment, disarmed him and threw him into the jolly-boat, which was below the staging where the sentinel was placed. He immediately jumped in after him, the other three closely following him, when they instantly pushed off, snatched up the oars, and rowed direct for the shore with the agility of so many Nantucket whalemen. The rapidity and complete effect with which all this was done, was astonishing to the British. They were, however, soon fired upon by all the sentries who had any chance of reaching them, from all the ships as

they passed. They got out their numerous boats with all speed, and placed in the bow of each as many marines as could well stand, and these kept up a continued fire of musketry upon the four fugitives in the jolly-boat, ballasted with a British prisoner. Notwithstanding the close and heavy firing they wounded but one of the four; so that three of them were able to run for it when the boat reached the shore. As soon as they set foot on shore, they made directly for the fields. The marines soon followed, firing every few moments upon them, but without hitting them. Our men so completely distanced them that we all thought they would make their escape from his majesty's marines; and they would have effected it, had not the country people poured out of the farm-houses and the brick-yards. In a few moments the fields appeared covered with people. They outran the marines, and pursued our brave adventurers so closely from all points that they exhausted them of breath and fairly run them down, all except the nervous Indian, and he did honor to the Narraganset tribe, and his brave ancestors, so renowned in New England history.[1] We saw him from the *Crown Prince* prison ship, skipping over the ground like a buck, and defying his pursuers; but unfortunately for this son of the forest he sprained his ancle in leaping a fence, which compelled him to surrender; otherwise he might have ran on to London, in fair chace, before they could have come up with him.

While sitting on the ground, and unable to walk by reason of his dislocated bone, the country people approached him with caution. They did not think it quite safe to come close up to a man of his extraordinary stature and commanding aspect. He was, however, soon surrounded by a large number of marines, who had the great honor of recapturing a lame Indian, and conducting him back again to his Britannic Majesty's fleet of three deckers, at anchor off his royal dock of Chatham!

We made several attempts to gain our liberty while lying in the

[1] See Dr. Holmes' Annals.

river Medway; but none of our daring feats equalled this of the Indian. We gave him the name of *Baron Trenck,* and pronounced him his superior; for he had to pass the fire of several ships, and the jolly-boat appeared to be surrounded in a shower of shot, and yet only one man was wounded in the leg. When the Indian had made the fields, and was ascending the rising ground, all the prisoners in our ship gave him three cheers. We cheered him as he came along back in the boat with his comrades, and drank their healths in the first liquor we obtained. It is for deeds of bravery, and indications of a commanding mind, and superior strength and agility of body, that our aboriginals in North America appoint their kings; and certainly there is more sense and reason in it, than making the son a king because his father was king. This Indian was by nature a commander.

It was, be sure, an extraordinary sight, mixed with something of the ludicrous—to see three white Americans and one Indian, with a disarmed British red-coat under their feet in the jolly-boat, not daring to raise his head, while about thirty boats, with above 250 seamen and nearly as many marines, were rowing, and puffing and blowing, and firing and loading and loading and firing at a small boat, containing three American seamen and one Indian, without any weapon or instrument except the oars they rowed with. While the British marines were ruffling the water around the flying boat with their bullets, we, on board the prison ships, sensible of their danger, felt as much interest and probably more apprehension, than the fugitives themselves. It was an anxious period of hope, fear and animating pride, which sometimes petrified us into silence, and then caused us to rend the air with acclamations and clapping of hands. The Indian, was, however, the hero of the piece. We saw and admired his energetic mind, his abhorrence of captivity, and his *irresistible* love of freedom. This fellow was not, probably, at all below some of the Grecian captains who went to the siege of Troy; and he only wanted the advantages of education

and of modern discipline to have become a distinguished commander. The inspiring love of liberty was all the theme, after the daring exploit of our countrymen, and it made us uneasy and stimulated us to contemplate similar acts of hardihood. We had now become pretty nearly tired of cutting holes through the ship's bottom and sides, for it was always detected, and we were made to pay for repairing the damage, out of our provisions. After seeing what four men could effect, our thoughts turned more upon a general insurrection than upon the partial escapes of a few. We perceived, clearly enough, that our keepers dreaded our enterprising spirit; and we could discover that they knew that we despised them, and ridiculed them. Some of our saucy boys, studying arithmetic, with their slates and pencils in their hands, would say out loud, as if stating a sum, *"if it took 350 British seamen and marines to catch four Yankees, how many British sailors and marines would it take to catch ten thousand of us?"*

We could perceive a general uneasiness throughout our ship; even our good friend, Mr. ————, the worthy Scotchman, said to me about this time, "Your countrymen are such a restless, daring set of beings that it is not safe to befriend you, and I wish you were all safe and happy in your own country, and all of us at peace." A change of situation was foretold, but of what kind we know not. The next chapter will inform us all about it.

## CHAPTER IX

IN consequence of various attempts to escape prison, and of the late daring enterprise at noon-day, the officers of this ignoble fleet of prison ships grew very uneasy. They doubtless felt that there was neither honor nor pleasure, but much danger in this sort of service. It was often said among them, that they felt perfectly safe when they had several thousand French prisoners under their charge. These lively people passed their time in little ingenious manufactures, and in gaming, and seemed to wait patiently until their day of liberation should come; but these Americans, said they, are the most restless, contriving set of men we ever saw; their amusement seems to be contriving how to escape and to plague their keepers. They seem to take a pleasure in making us uneasy, and in exciting our apprehensions of their escape, and then they laugh and make themselves merry at our anxiety. One of the officers said that the American prisoners had systematised the art of tormenting. There is a sort of mischievous humor among our fellows that is at times rather provoking to officers habituated to prompt obedience and a distance and deference bordering upon awe which our countrymen never feel for any man.

It seems that the British government, or the admiralty department, were fully acquainted with this state of things and with the difficult task which the miserable officers of this miserable Medway fleet had to perform. The government did not seem to wish to exercise a greater degree of rigor over the American prisoners, because they knew, and all Europe knew, that the United States treated their prisoners with distinguished humanity; and yet they firmly believed, that unless more rigor was exercised, the Americans would rise upon their keepers before the winter commenced.

The rumor is, that we are to be sent to Dartmoor prison. Some

of our crew have lately received a letter from a prisoner in that *dépôt* of misery, for such he describes it. He tells us that it is situated in the most dreary and uncultivated spot in England; and that to the sterility of the soil are added the black coloring of superstition.

A *Moor,* a word not used in America, is used in England to denote a low, marshy piece of ground, or a sterile spot like our pine barrens, divested of every thing like a pine tree. It denotes something between a beach and a meadow. It is a solemn-faced truth in this country of our superstitious ancestors, that every extensive and dreary moor, in England is haunted by troubled ghosts, witches and walking dead men, visiting, in a sociable way, each other's graves. It is really surprising, and to an intelligent American incredible, that stout, hearty, and otherwise bold Englishmen dare not walk alone over the dreary spot or moor, where the prison now stands, in a dark and cloudy night, without trembling with horror at *a nothing!* Beside the stories of witches flying about in the air, and dead men strolling over the moor the letter contained an account of the origin of this new famous prison. It stated that this *Dartmoor* belonged to that beautiful gambler, the Dutchess of Devonshire,[1] who lost it in a game of hazard with the Prince of Wales, who, to enhance the value of it, (he being, as all the world knows, a contriving, speculating, economical, close-fisted, miserly genius) contrived to have erected there a species of a fortress, enclosing seven very large buildings or prisons, for the reception of captured seamen; from which establishment its royal landlord received a very handsome annual rent; and this princely anecdote is as firmly believed as the stories of the witches and the walking dead men. The only remark we would make upon it here, is, that Dartmoor has a dismal idea associated with it—and that was sufficient to make our people conceive of it as a place doleful as a coal-pit.

[1] The letter writer, we suspect, had not studied carefully, the laws and customs of England, where all landed property belongs to the king, who allows the eldest male of a family to possess it during his good behavior.

Not long after the receipt of this letter, one hundred and fifty of our countrymen were sent off by water, to this Dartmoor Prison; but the measles appearing among them, they were stopped at the Nore, which is at the entrance of the Thames. They are every day drafting more, which are destined for the dismal prison house. We are all struck with horror at the idea of our removal from our ships in the river Medway, which runs through a beautiful country. It is "the untried scene," that fills us with dread, "for clouds and darkness rest upon it." Last year we were transported from inhospitable Nova Scotia, over the boisterous Atlantic, and suffered incredible hardships in a rough winter passage; and now we are to be launched again on the same tumultuous ocean, to go four hundred miles coastwise, to the most dismal spot in England. Who will believe it? the men who exercised all their art and contrivance, and exerted all their muscular powers to cut through the double plankings and copper of a ship of the line, in hopes of escaping from her, now leave the same ship with regret. I have read of men who had been imprisoned many years in the Bastile, who when liberated sighed to return to their place of long confinement, and felt unhappy out of it. I thought it wondrous strange; but I now cease to be surprised. This prison-ship, through long habit and the dread of a worse place, is actually viewed with feelings of attachment. Of the hundred men who were sent hither last year from Halifax, there are only about seventy of us remaining on board the *Crown Prince*. The next draft will lessen our numbers, and separate some of those who have been long associates in bondage. It is not merely the bodily inconvenience of being transported here and there, that we dread, so much as the exposure to insult and sarcasm of our enemies. We have been, and still dread to be again placed in rows, on board of a ship or in a prison yard to be stared at by the British vulgar, just as if we were Guinea negroes, exposed to the examination of some scoundrel negro merchants, commissioned to re-stock a plantation with black cattle, capable of thinking, talking, laughing and weeping. This is not all. We have been obliged

often to endure speeches of this sort, most commonly uttered in the *Scotch* accent—"My life on't that fellow is a renegado Englishman—or Irishman—an halter will be, I hope, his portion. D—n all such rebel looking rascals." Whatever our feelings and resentments may be on account of impressment, inhuman treatment, and plundering our fobs and pockets and of our clothing, we never speak of the British king and government in terms of gross indecency; whereas we American prisoners of war are often assailed with the bitterest sarcasms and curses of the President of the United States, the Congress, and some of our military commanders.

I have already mentioned that all my family, as well as myself, were what they called "Federalists," or fault-finders, and opposers of Madison's administration; and that I and all the rest of us dropt every trait of federalism in the British prisons, where to call a man a Federalist was resented as the deepest insult. I appeal to all my companions in misery for the accuracy of this opinion. A man who is willing to expose his life to the balls and bayonets of his country's foes, to the enemies of his government, and to the independence and union of his nation, holds his country and the government of his choice in higher estimation than his life. Such a man cannot hear the United States, and their President, spoken of in terms of contempt without feeling the keenest anguish. This I have felt, and have remarked its effects in the countenances of my insulted comrades. Situated as we are, it would be great imprudence to resent what we are often obliged to hear. Captivity, under British prison keepers and British captains of transport men of war, are the proper colleges for teaching the love of our republican government, and strong attachment to its administration; and they are proper places to make the rankest Federalist abjure his errors and cling to the constituted authorities of the country whose flag he adores, and for whose defence he exposes his life. It is inconceivable how closely we are here pressed together in the cause

of our dear country, and in honor of its high officers. Were all the inhabitants of the United States as unanimous in their political sentiments, as we are, in the river Medway, they would all be ready to exclaim, each man to his neighbour,

> Rouse, and revive your ancient glory,
> Unite—and drive the world before you.

*July* 1*st,* 1813.—Our feelings are all alive at this joyous season, for we are now making preparations for celebrating the birthday of our nation; and though in captivity, we are determined not to suffer the glorious Fourth of July to pass over without testifying our undivided attachment to our beloved country, and to the cause it is fighting for. Each mess are making arrangements in, be sure, a small and humble but a hearty way, for the celebration; and it is a curious spectacle to see the pleasureable anticipations of the prisoners in a feast of good things, all of which would not amount to so plentiful a repast as that which the criminals in our State Prison, near Boston, enjoy every day, the plenty of good porter excepted. Application has been made to Capt. Hutchinson, for an additional allowance of beer and porter, which request he has granted, with his usual goodness. Every brain is at work to know how to spend what we have been accumulating for the Fourth of July, with the most pleasure and the most propriety.

The Fourth of July, 1813, is past. We petitioned the commander to allow us to hoist the American flag, but he refused to gratify us. Application was then made to the Commodore, who gave permission that we might hoist our national colors as high as the top of our railings; and the same permission was granted to all the other prison-ships. We had obtained a drum and fife; and being all assembled on the forecastle, and such other parts of the ship as were accessible to us prisoners, we in the morning struck up the animating tune of *Yankee Doodle,* and saluted the *Nassau* prison-ship with three cheers, which was returned; the ships more distant caught the joyful sound and echoed it back to its source.

The fife and drum, the latter ornamented with the king's arms, played the whole forenoon, while the jovial prisoners drank, in *English* porter, SUCCESS TO THE AMERICAN CAUSE!

At twelve o'clock an Oration, hastily prepared, and rather too inflammatory for about a tenth part of our audience, was delivered, by a prisoner of respectable talents; a man who, having been impressed into the British service, had been promoted to the rank of boatswain of a frigate; and liberated from the service in consequence of his declaring it against his honor and conscience to fight against his countrymen, or aid in pulling down the colors of his nation. This man very deliberately mounted an elevation, and with great force, and with a characteristic freedom, pronounced an Address, which the prisoners listened to with profound silence, excepting the clapping of hands, and sometimes cheers, at the end of such sentences as warmed and overpowered their silence. At the close of the whole the orator was greeted with three times three cheers, throughout the ship, and reached even to the shores. The oratory of the boatswain seemed to electrify the officers and men set over us. The master and the surgeon appeared really pleased; even Osmore, our jailor, "grinn'd horribly a ghastly smile."

After the oration, we returned below to our prepared dinners at which our reverend orator asked a blessing with more fervor than is commonly observed in our Cossock[1] clergymen; and we fell to with a zest and hilarity rarely to be found among a large collection of prisoners. If, like the captive Jews on the Euphrates, we had hung our harps upon the willows of the Medway, we took them down on this joyous occasion. We felt the spirit of freedom glow within us; and we anticipated the day when we should celebrate our anniversary in that dear land of liberty, which we longed to see, and panted after, as the thirsty hart pants after the water brooks.

The Fourth of July was celebrated in a very becoming manner, on board the *Nassau* prison-ship, by similar acts of rejoicing. I

[1] Cassock.

have obtained a copy of the Oration, delivered by a seaman, on that day. Among the audience, were several ladies and gentlemen from the neighborhood.

## AN ORATION

Delivered by permission, on board the *Nassau* prison-ship, at Chatham, England, by an American Seaman, prisoner of war.

MY FELLOW PRISONERS AND BELOVED COUNTRYMEN:

We are assembled to commemorate that ever memorable Fourth of July, 1776, when our forefathers, inspired with the love of liberty, dared to divest themselves of the shackles of tyranny and oppression: yes, my friends, on that important day these stripes were hoisted on the standard of liberty, as a signal of unity and of their determination to fight under them until America was numbered among the nations of the globe, as one of them, a free and independent nation. Yes, my countrymen, she was determined to spare neither blood nor treasure, until she had accomplished the grand object of her intentions; an object, my friends, which she was prompted by Heaven to undertake, and inspired by all that honor, justice, and patriotism could infuse; her armies were then in the field, with a WASHINGTON at their head, whose upright conduct and valorous deeds you have often heard related, and the memory of whom should be held sacred in the breasts of every true-born American.—Let his heart beat high at the name of WASHINGTON! Sacred as the archives of heaven! for he was a man of truth, honor, and integrity, and a soldier fostered by the gods to be the saviour of his country.

The struggle was long and arduous; but our rallying word was "Liberty or Death!" Torrents of blood were spilt; towns and villages were burnt, and nothing but havoc, devastation and destruction was seen from one end of the continent to the other; and this was not all; but to complete the horrid scene, an infernal horde of savage murderers was prompted by our enemy to butcher our helpless wives and children! Then did our fathers' patriotic hearts swell in their bosoms, and they were ten-fold more resolved to break the yoke of the tyrant.

I recite these things, my countrymen, that you may know how to prize your liberty, that precious gem for which your fathers fought, wading in rivers of blood, until it pleased the Almighty to crown their arms with success; and, glorious to relate, America was acknowledged free and independent by all the powers of Europe. Happy period! then did our warriors exult in what they had so nobly achieved; then commerce revived, and the *thirteen* stripes were hoisted upon the tall masts of our ships and displayed from pole to pole; emigrants flocked from many parts to taste our freedom, and other blessings heaven had bestowed

upon us; our population increased to an incredible degree; our commerce flourished, and our country has been the seat of peace, plenty and happiness for many years. At length the fatal blast reached our land! America was obliged to unsheath the sword in justification of her violated rights. Our ships were captured and condemned upon frivolous pretensions; our seamen were dragged from their lawful employment; they were torn from the bosom of their beloved country; sons from their fathers; husbands from their wives and children, to serve with reluctance for many years, under the severity of a martial law. The truth of this many of you can attest to, perhaps with inward pining and a bleeding heart!

My countrymen! I did not mount this rostrum to inveigh against the British; only the demagogues, the war-faction I exclaim against. We all know, and that full well, that there are many honest, patriotic men in this country, who would raise their voices to succour us, and their *arms* too, could they do it with impunity. The sympathetic hearts of the good feel for the oppressed in all climes. And now, my countrymen, it is more than probable that the land of your nativity will be involved in war, and deluged in blood for some time to come; yes, my friends, that happy country which is the guardian of everything you possess, that you esteem, near and dear, has again to struggle for her liberty. The British war-faction are rushing upon us with their fleets and armies, thinking, perhaps, to crush us in a moment. Strange infatuation! They have forgotten Bunker's Hill! They have forgotten Saratoga, and Yorktown, when the immortal WASHINGTON with his victorious army chased them through the Jerseys, under the muzzles of their ship's cannon for protection! They have forgotten that the sons of America have as good blood in their veins, and possess as sound limbs and nerves as they; strange infatuation! I repeat it, if they presume to think that eight millions of free people will be very easily divested of their liberty; my word for it, they will not give up at the sight of their men-of-war or their red coats; no, my friends, they will meet the lads who will play them the tune of Yankee Doodle, as well as they did at Lexington, or Bunker Hill. Besides, my countrymen, there is a plant in that country, (very little of which grows any where else,) the infusion of which stimulates the true sons of America to deeds of valour. There is something so fostering in the very sound of its name, that it holds superiority wherever it grows; it is a sacred plant, my friends, its name is LIBERTY, and may God grant that that plant may continue to grow in the United States of America, and never be rooted out so long as it shall please Him to continue the celestial orb to roll in yon azure expanse.

Ah! Britons! Britons! had your counsellors been just, and had they listened with attention, and followed the advice of the immortal[1] *William Pitt,* Britain

[1] The celebrated Earl of Chatham.

and America might have been one until the present hour; and they, united, in time might have given laws to the inhabitants of this terrestrial ball.

Many of you, my friends, have voluntarily embraced this loathsome prison rather than betray your country; for by the laws of your country, to aid or give any assistance to an enemy, is treason, is punishable with death. I therefore hope that your country will reward you abundantly for your toil. And one and all let us embrace the icy arms of death, rather than cherish the least symptoms of an inclination to betray our country. Some have done it, who have pretended to be Americans, so far as to shield themselves under the name. Whether they were *real* Americans or not, is hard for me to say; but if they were, they have put their hand to the plough, and not only looked back but have *gone* back. I have not the least doubt but they will meet their reward; that is, they will be spurned at by those very people that laid the bait for them. Such characters will for ever be condemned, and held in detestation by both parties. Therefore all you who feel the tide of true American blood flow through your hearts, I hope never will attempt to flee from the allegiance of your country. It is cowardice, it is felony; and for all those who have done it, we may pray that the departed spirits of their fathers, who so nobly fought, bled, and fell in the conflict to gain them their liberty, will haunt them in their midnight slumbers, and that they may feel the horrors of conscience and the dread of a gallows! also, that they may have no rest, but like the dove that Noah sent out of the ark, be restless until they return to the allegiance of their country. And now, my countrymen, let us join in unison to correct our own morals; let us be sober, let us be vigilant over ourselves while in this situation. And although it is not in our power to assist our countrymen in the present conflict, yet if we are good the power of Heaven will fight for us; for the good must merit God's peculiar care. The powers of Heaven fought for us; they assisted us to gain our liberty, it is evident from the very circumstance, that in our struggle with Great Britain for our liberty, we had no navy, or none of any consequence, yet Great Britain lost more line of battle ships in that war than she did with France, although France is a great naval power. And we should be thankful to God for all the blessings he hath bestowed upon us from time to time, and in particular for the blessings of that unity which we are recently informed prevails among our countrymen in America; united they stand, nor will the powers of hell be able to overthrow them. And now let us appeal to the God of Sabaoth, that is, the God of armies—let us appeal to Him who holds the balance, and weighs the events of battles and of realms, and by his decision we must abide. And may He grant us health, peace and unity in this our disagreeable situation; and let us all join in concord to praise the Ruler and Governor of the universe. Amen. Amen.

Among the songs sung on this occasion were several composed by seafaring people, in our own country. The following drew tears from the eyes of our generous hearted sailors. It pathetically describes what many of them had experienced, the impressment of an American sailor boy by a British man of war, the tearing up of his legal protection, and of his sinking under a broken heart. It was written by Mr. *John De Wolf*, of Rhode Island.

### *THE IMPRESSMENT OF AN AMERICAN SAILOR BOY*

#### A SONG

*Sung on board the British prison-ship, Crown Prince, the Fourth of July, 1813, by a number of the American prisoners.*

The youthful Sailor mounts the bark,
And bids each weeping friend adieu;
Fair blows the gale, the canvas swells;
Slow sink the uplands from his view.

Three mornings, from his ocean bed,
Resplendent beams the God of day;
The fourth, high looming in the mist,
A war-ship's floating banners play.

Her yawl is launch'd; light o'er the deep,
Too kind, she wafts a ruffian band;
Her blue track lengthens to the bark,
And soon on deck the miscreants stand.

Around they throw the baleful glance;
Suspense holds mute the anxious crew—
Who is their prey?—poor sailor boy!
The baleful glance is fix'd on you.

Nay, why that useless scrip unfold?
They damn the *"lying Yankee scrawl,"*
Torn from thine hand, it strews the wave,
They force thee, trembling to the yawl.

Sick was thine heart, as from the deck
The hand of friendship wav'd farewell;
Mad was thy brain, as, far behind,
In the grey mist, thy vessel fell.

One hope, yet, to thy bosom clung,
The captain mercy might impart;
Vain was that hope, which bade thee look
For mercy in a Pirate's heart.

What woes can man on man inflict,
When malice joins with uncheck'd pow'r;
Such woes, unpitied and unknown,
For many a month, the sailor bore.

Oft gemm'd his eye the bursting tear,
As mem'ry linger'd on past joy;
As oft they flung the cruel jeer,
And damn'd the "chicken-liver'd boy."

When sick at heart, with hope deferr'd,
Kind sleep his wasting form embrac'd,
Some ready minion ply'd the lash,
And the lov'd dream of freedom chac'd.

Fast to an end his miseries drew;
The deadly hectic flush'd his cheek;
On his pale brow the cold dew hung,
He sigh'd, and sunk upon the deck!

The sailor's woes drew forth no sigh;
No hand would close the sailor's eye;
Remorseless, his pale corpse they gave
Unshrouded, to the friendly wave.

And as he sunk beneath the tide,
A hellish shout arose;
Exultingly the demons cried,
*"So fare all Albion's* REBEL *foes!"*

The power of music and of song, on such occasions, has been witnessed in all ages of the world, especially in the youthful or chivalric period of a nation's existence, which is the present time, in the history of the United States. We all have felt and witnessed the animating effects of the simple national tune of *Yankee Doodle*. Our New England boys cannot stand still when it is played. To that tune our regiments march with an energy that no other music inspires. At its sound, the sentinel on his post shoulders his musket, and marches his limits with a smartness that shows that his brave heart pulsates to the warlike drum. Such a people, thus animated and united, is absolutely invincible by all the powers of Europe combined.

Time, situation and circumstances will give us national songs. Many ages passed away before England was animated by a national hymn. The Americans have parodied this hymn, substituting, "God *save great Washington!*" &c.

Our orator, considering where he was and that he had an hundred British hearers, used pretty harsh language. He apostrophised the English thus: "Haughty nation! with one hand thou art deluding and dividing thy victims in New England, and with the other thou bearest the weapon of vengeance; and while employing the ruthful savage, with his tomahawk and scalping knife, thou art boasting of thy humanity, thy magnanimity, and thy religion! Bloody villains! detestable associates! linked together by fear, and leagued with savages by necessity, to murder a Christian people, for the alleged crime of fighting over again the battle of independence. Beware, bloody nations of Britons and savage Indians, of the recoiling vengeance of a brave people. For shame—talk no more of your Christianity, of your Bible and missionary societies, when your only aim is to direct the scalping knife, and give force to the arm of the savage. No longer express the smile of pleasure on hearing a stupid Governor proclaim you to be *"The Bulwark of our Religion!"* You have filled India with blood and ashes; you have

murdered the Irish for contending for liberty of conscience; you continue the scourge of war in Spain; you pay Russia, Sweden, Germany and Holland the price of blood; and to crown all, decorate your colors, and your seats of legislation, with scalps torn from Americans, male and female; and you are sowing discord, and diffusing a Jacobinical spirit through a Protestant country, which you cannot conquer by force. But, (continued the orator, waving his sinewy arm, and hard and heavy hand,) the time is not far distant, when your guilty nation will be duly appreciated, and justly punished;" and saying this, he drove his iron fist into the palm of his left hand, and stamped with his foot on the capstan, where he stood, while his admiring countrymen rewarded the Herculean orator with three cheers.

There is no disguising it, these Englishmen not only respect us but fear us. They perceive a mighty difference between us, and the cringing, gambling Frenchmen. If they are tolerably well informed, and think at all, they must conclude that we Yankees are filled with, and keep up that bold and daring spirit of liberty, which made England what she is, and the loss of which is now perceived by their surrendered ships and beaten armies in America. All these things will hereafter be detailed by some future Gibbon, in the *History of the Decline and Fall of the (British) Empire.*

We closed the day, on this memorable fourth of July, pretty much as we began it; we struck our flag at sunset and saluted the other ships with three hearty cheers. Throughout the whole, the prisoners, even to the boys, behaved with becoming decorum, and the whole was concluded without any disagreeable accident or any thing like a quarrel; and in saying this, we desire to acknowledge the extraordinary good behaviour of all the British officers and men on board the *Crown Prince.*

Excepting the apprehensions of being sent off to Dartmoor prison, of which we entertained horrid ideas, we were tolerably happy. After the measles ceased we were all very healthy; and

there exists a good understanding between the prisoners and our commander, Osmore; which they say is owing to the influence of his amiable wife. This worthy woman has discovered that we are not a gang of vagabonds, but that many of the American prisoners are not only men of solid understanding and correct principles, but men whose minds have been improved by good education. The manner and style in which we celebrated our national independence have created a respect for us. The officers extend a better course of treatment towards us, and this has occasioned our treating them with more respect. Politeness generates politeness, and insult, insult. They find that coaxing and fair words is the only way to manage Americans.

There is a set of busy-idlers among us, a sort of newsmongers, fault-finders, and predictors, who are continually bothering [1] us with unsubstantial rumors. The newspapers we take are enough to confound any man; but these creatures are worse than the London news-writers. Sometimes we are told that Baltimore is burnt; and then that New-York is taken; and we have been positively assured that old New-England has declared for the British, and that the governor of Massachusetts and his council had dined on board a British man of war in Boston harbor; and that President Madison had been hanged in effigy in Boston, Newburyport, and Portsmouth. At other times we were told positively and circumstantially, that three frigates sent their boats into Marblehead, and after driving out all the women and children, set fire to the town and reduced the whole to ashes; and this was for some time credited. We have a number of fine Marblehead men here in captivity, all staunch friends of their country's cause. I well remember since that period, that it was told us that peace between America and England was concluded, and that one of its conditions was giving up the fisheries on the banks of Newfoundland. This alarmed the Marblehead men more than the report of burning their town;

[1] An Irish word, meaning a distraction of attention by reason of words striking our intellect through *both ears* confusedly.

they raved and swore like madmen. "If that be the case," said they, "I am damned—Marblehead is forever damned, and we are all damned; and damnation seize the peace-makers who have consented to this condition." On this subject they worked themselves into a fever, and were very unhappy all the time the story was believed. Such like stories were told to us, oft times so circumstantially that we all believed them. When discovered to be false, they were called *galley-news* or galley *packets*. These mischievous characters are continually sporting with our feelings, and secretly laughing at the uneasiness they occasion. There is one man who has got the name of *lying Bob;* who is remarkable for the fertility of his invention; there is so much apparent correctness in all he advances. He mentions and describes the man who informed him, states little particulars, and relates circumstances so closely connected with acknowledged facts that the most cautious and incredulous are often taken in by him. He is a constitutional liar, and the fellow has such a plausible mode of lying, and wears throughout such a fixed and solemn phiz that his news has been circulated by us all, with all our wise reasons, and explanations, and conjectures, that although we are sometimes angry enough to knock his brains out, we cannot help laughing at the *hoax*. To the name of lying Bob, we have added that of *"Printer to Prince Beelzebub's Royal Gazette."*

This little community of ours, crowded within the planks of a single ship, is but the prototype of the great communities on the land. Here we see working all those passions, hopes, fears, emulations, envies and even contentions for distinction, which like the winds and tides of the ocean keep the human mind healthy, vigorous, and progressing to general benefit. Amidst it all, we could discover *"the ruling passion,"* the love of country, and a firm belief that our countrymen understood rational liberty better, and could defend it longer, than any nation now in existence.

Many people are beguiled with an idea that sailors have no seri-

ous thoughts of religion, because they use swearing, and, too often, a profane phraseology, without any meaning. But seamen generally have as serious ideas of religion as landsmen; and are, in my opinion, full as good. Hypocrisy is not among their vices. They never pretend to more religion than their conduct proclaims. You see and hear the worse of them, and that cannot always be said of our brethren on shore. We have had a Methodist preacher exhorting us twice a week until lately; but he has discontinued his visits, for he found the hearts of some of our fellows as hard as their faces, and he relinquished the hope of their conversion to Methodism. There was at one time on board our ship, a little, ugly French surgeon's mate, who had lived several years in London, and in the southern part of America. He could speak and read the English language equally well with his own. He ridiculed all religion, and talked in such an irreverent style of the Bible, of Jesus Christ, and of the Virgin Mary that our sailors would not associate with him, nor, at times, to eat with him. On one occasion his profanity was so shocking, that he ran some risk of being thrown overboard. He was a witty, comical fellow, and they would listen and laugh at his drollery; but they finally stopped his mouth from uttering things for which he would be severely punished in England and in America.

Generally speaking, in the religious notions of our sailors there is mixed a portion of that superstition which we, our forefathers, and foremothers brought with them from England, Scotland and Ireland. They believe, for example, in spirits, or ghosts, and that they haunt houses and ships; and that they have sometimes appeared with horrid visage and menacing countenances, at the bedside of a cruel captain; and above all to the false hearted Tar, who cruelly deserted his too credulous Poll, who drowned herself in despair. The common sailor often tells such stories, and sings them in ballads, both which are generally ended with the good

moral sentiment of the punishment of cruelty and treachery, and the reward of the kind hearted and humane.

It may appear singular that men whose conduct is generally so opposite to the prescribed rules of the Priest, should have so firm an opinion of another life, after their bodies are eaten up by sharks, or blown to atoms; but it is really the case with the British and American sailors, for they have the strongest belief in the existence of spirits, and all their stories and traditions tend to confirm this superstition. How often have I known them huddled together in the night, telling stories of feats of danger and desperation! a ghost or spirit is generally brought into the history. Nothing suits these daring set of men better than a solemn narrative of a supernatural achievement, and a supernatural escape; but to be charming it must have a tinge of the horrible. Shakespeare would have recognized some of these men as his kindred, and they him as a relation. Good luck and ill luck, lucky days and unlucky days, as well as lucky ships, attach themselves to a sailor's mind. A remarkable instance of this we have in our ill-fated frigate *Chesapeake.* Ever since the British ship *Leopard* fired into this American frigate in a period of profound peace, and caused her to strike her colors, and which led to her being boarded and her men to be mustered by compulsion, and some of her crew taken and carried forcibly on board the *Leopard,* one of which was afterwards hanged; after this deep wound on our country's honor, this frigate was ever after viewed as *unlucky.*

In confirmation of this nautical curse, she met with a series of disasters during the war which were not attributed to ill management, but to ill luck. Thus one time she was coming up the harbor of Boston from a cruise, where she lost spar after spar and topmast after topmast; and when in full sight of the town, and not much wind, over board went her fore-top-mast and several men were drowned in their fall from the rigging. This was not attributed to lack of judgment, but to ill luck. When this ill-omened ship lay

in Boston harbor, previous to her last and fatal cruise, she could not get men, and that from the impression on the minds of sailors that she was an unlucky ship. This operated to her final misfortune, for her crew was made up of everything that offered. Her captain was a stranger to his crew, and to his officers; his first lieutenant lay at the point of death when she sailed; her motley crew mutinied on account of their pay, before they weighed anchor; her brave, I had like to have said rash commander, sailed out in a great hurry; her cables were not quite stowed away, nor other things arranged in their places, when she bore down on the cool and orderly *Shannon;* and to crown all her intrepid commander, a man of six feet four inches, went into action within half pistol shot, in full uniform, as if he defied the power of the British musketry. I have conversed with some of her officers and men in my captivity, and think that I am warranted in saying that there was much more high-toned bravery exhibited on that day, than good conduct. The sailors, however, think differently; they all attribute it to that unavoidable fatality which forever adheres, like pitch, to an unlucky ship. O, my country!

> "It was that fatal and perfidious bark
> Built in th' eclipse, and rigg'd with curses dark,
> That sunk so low that sacred head of thine!"
>
> *Lycidas.*

## CHAPTER X

*AUGUST 30th.*—Drafts continue to be made from this ship to be sent off to Dartmoor Prison. There are but few of us remaining, and we are every day in expectation of removal. All go off with evident reluctance, from an apprehension that the change will be for the worse. It is the "untried scene" that fills us with anxiety. We are more disposed to bear our present ills, than fly to others which we know not of.

Oh, how we envy the meanest looking wretch we see, crawling on the shore, gathering sticks to cook his fish. There the beggar enjoys the natural inheritance of man, sweet LIBERTY; if the unfeeling, the avaricious and morose refuse his petition, he can sweeten the disappointment with the reflection that he has liberty to walk where he pleases. He is not shut up in the prime of life, and cut off from all intercourse with those he holds most dear; he is not lingering out his life and health under the morose countenance of an unfeeling jailor. He has not, like us, a home, where peace, plenty and every good await to welcome us. Who can express the anguish felt by some of us, wretched prisoners, here crowded together like sheep, men who have broken no law of either country but who have stood courageously forth in supporting the sacred cause of our country, and in defending *"free trade and sailors' rights."* Should this war continue some years longer, or should peace be restored and another war with Britain commence, I will venture to predict that our enemies will take but few prisoners *alive*. My own mind is entirely made up on this head. I hope to stand ever ready to risk my life for the liberty and independence of our nation, and for the preservation of my own personal liberty.

The American sailor has a beloved home; he was born and brought up in a house that had a "fire place" in it. Many of them

here, in captivity, have wives and children, most of them have parents and brothers and sisters. These poor fellows partake, at times, the misery of their dear relatives, at three thousand miles distance. They recollect their aged mothers and decrepid fathers, worn down with age, labor, and anxious thoughts for the welfare of their absent sons. Some have wives and little children, weeping for their absent husbands and suffering for the good and comfortable things of this life, having none to help them. In families, neighborhoods, and villages men are supported by leaning on each other or by supporting each other; and we have endeavored to do so too; but now our numbers are thinning, some of our best, our steadiest and most prudent men, have left us and gone to Dartmoor Prison. I have felt very low-spirited for some days past. It is true our numbers are now so few that we can run about, and beguile the tedious hours by a greater variety of exercise and amusement than heretofore; but then our soberest men are gone, and left behind some of the most noisy and disorderly of our whole crew; and young as I am I am little disposed to make a riot or noise merely for noise' sake.

A disturbance took place last night, which deprived all of us of sleep. It was owing to the unaccommodating disposition of our commander, Mr. Osmore. About thirty prisoners were selected and called aft, with their hammocks all tied up, to be ready to go off early in the morning, in a tender. The tender did not arrive as was expected; the sergeant was ordered to count us over in the evening, to go to rest, whereupon the thirty drafted men went aft and requested their hammocks to sleep in; Mr. Osmore replied, that as they were to go off early in the morning they would only detain the tender, if they had their hammocks to take down and pack up again, on which account he refused to let them have their usual accommodations for sleeping. The men went below very much dissatisfied at the churlish disposition of the commander; and as they despaired being able to sleep themselves on bare boards,

they all determined that Osmore should not sleep. They waited quietly till about ten o'clock, when the commander usually went to bed, and then they tore up the large oak benches, tied ropes to them, and run with them round the deck, drawing the benches after them like a sled, at the same time holloaing, screaming and yelling and making every noise that their ingenuity or malice could devise. Sometimes they drove these oaken benches full but against the aft bulkhead, so as to make the ship tremble again with the noise, like cannon. They jammed down the crockery belonging to the marines, which was set up on the opposite side of the cock-pit, and frightened their wives out of their beds. The noise and jarring were so great, that it seemed as if they were breaking up the ship for the sake of her iron work. Lieut. Osmore sent a marine down, to order them to be still and go to sleep. They replied that they had no conveniences for sleeping, and that Osmore had acted like a villain in depriving them unnecessarily of their hammocks, for which brutality, they were determined that he should not sleep any more than they: after which they recommenced their riot and thundering noise, which brought Osmore out of his cabin, and called one of the committee to him, and told him to tell the men that if they did not directly cease their noise, he would confine every man of them below, for three days. The committee-man replied that nothing could then be done, for that the mob had fairly capsized the government of the ship, and all that he could say would only add to the riot and confusion. "Then," said he, "I'll be d—d if I do not fire upon them." Some of the mob answered "Fire, and be d—d"; and the commander hesitated a moment, and returned to his cabin; for he saw the men were wrought up to the battle pitch, and rather wished him to fire, by way of excuse for their attack upon him whom they most cordially despised.

Directly upon this they collected all the tin and copper pans, pots and kettles, and every sonorous metallic substance they could lay their hands on. These they tied together, and hitched bunches of

them here and there upon the oaken planks; and then, what with screaming, yelling like the Indian war-whoop, cheering, and the thundering noise of the planks grating along the deck, together with the ringing and clattering of their metallic vessels, they made altogether such a hideous "rattle-come-twang" that it was enough to raise all Chatham. All this was transacted in utter darkness. The officers doubtless saw that bloodshed and promiscuous death would be the consequence of firing among the rioters, and prudently left it to subside with the darkness of the night. These disorderly fellows would go round the decks twice, with all this thundering noise and clatter, and then be silent for about half an hour, or until they thought Mr. Osmore had got into a doze; and then they would recommence their horrible serenade. At length Osmore became so enraged that he swore by his Maker, that he would order every marine in the ship to fire in among them; but on some of the committee observing to him that he would be as likely to kill the innocent as the guilty, and as they were then silent, he went off again to his cabin; but within a quarter of an hour they began again their shocking serenade, and continued it, at provoking intervals, all the night, so that none could sleep in the ship.

In the morning the tender came alongside, and they all went on board of her. When they had all got in and pushed off from the ship's side, and while Osmore was superintending their departure, they all cried out, *baa! baa! baa!* until they got out of hearing. The next day he betrayed a disposition to punish, in some way, those prisoners that remained; but it was remarked to him that it was utterly impossible for any of them to stop the riot or to keep their disturbers quiet, and that they, themselves, were equally incommoded with him and his family; he prudently dropped the design. Although many of us disapproved of this behaviour of the men, none of us could help laughing at the noise, and its ludicrous effects. It is a fact, that the officers and marines of the *Crown Prince* prison ship, were more afraid of the American prisoners

than they were of them. This last frolic absolutely cowed them. One of the officers said to me, next day, "Your countrymen do not seem to be a bloody-minded set of men, like the Portuguese and Spaniards, but they have the most d—d provoking impudence I ever saw in any men: if they did not accompany it all with peals of laughter, and in the spirit of fun, I should put them down as a set of hell-hounds." I told him that I considered the last night's riot, not in the light of a mutiny, or a serious attempt to wound or scratch any man, but as a high frolic without any real malice, and was an evidence of that boisterous liberty in which they had been bred up, and arising also from their high notions of right and wrong. To which the worthy Scotchman replied "I hate a Frenchman, a Spaniard and a Portuguese; but I never can hate an American; and yet the three former behave infinitely better, and give us far less trouble than your saucy fellows." Had British prisoners behaved in this manner, in the prison ships in the harbor of Boston or Salem, would our officers have borne it with more patience?

As there were but few prisoners now remaining, and ample room to run and jump about for exercise, our men evidently recruited; and being in good spirits, the rose of health soon bloomed again on their manly cheeks. The soldiers made prisoners in Canada evidently gained strength, and acquired activity. If we compare their miserable, emaciated looks, on their arrival at Melville Prison from their wretched voyage down the St. Lawrence, with their present appearance, the difference is striking. The wretched appearance of these new-made soldiers, reflects no credit on the British. The savages of the forest never starve their prisoners. The War Department of the United States having ordered these men a portion of their pay, they appropriated it chiefly to purchase comfortable clothing, which has been productive of great good, and has probably saved the lives of some of them; others squandered away their money in dissipation and gambling.

A becoming degree of tranquility prevailed on board this prison ship, during my residence on it. On the 15th of September we were all sent on board the *Bahama* prison-ship, which lay farther up the reach. Here we found about three hundred of our countrymen, who received us with kindness and many marks of satisfaction. I could at once perceive that their situation had been less pleasant than ours in the *Crown Prince*. Little attention had been paid to cleanliness, and gambling had been carried to as great excess as their means would admit of. They seemed to lack either the power, or the resolution of adhering to and carrying into effect, good and wholesome regulations. I never saw a set of more ragged, dirty men in my life; and yet they were disposed to sell their last rag to get money to game with. Their misfortune was, they had too few men of sense and respectability among them. They had no good committeemen; not enough to bear down the current of vice and folly. We dread the contagion of bad example. Some of our men soon resorted to their detestable gambling tables, and pursued their old vices with astonishing avidity. We seriously expostulated with our companions on their returning to the pernicious practice of gambling, after they had had the virtue of refraining on board the *Crown Prince;* and our advice induced nearly all of them to renounce the destructive practice. I had read but never saw convincing evidence before, of gaming being a passion that rages in proportion to the degrees of misery, until it becomes a species of insanity.

We newcomers introduced certain measures that had a tendency to harmonise our sailors and soldiers. The disorders on board the *Bahama* arose principally from having on board a number of these two classes of men. Our sailors view a soldier as belonging to an order of men below them; and it must be confessed that our first crop of recruits, that were huddled together soon after the declaration of war, in some measure justified this notion. They were, many of them, idle, intemperate men, void of character and good

constitutions. The high-flying Federal clergy among other nonsense told their flocks that the war would demoralize the people; whereas it had the contrary effect, as it regarded the towns an hundred miles from the sea coast. It absolutely picked out all the rags, dirt and vice from our towns and villages, and transported them into Canada, where they were either captured, killed, or died with sickness, so that our towns and villages on the Atlantic were cleared of idlers and drunkards and experienced the benefit of their removal. The second crop of recruits, in 1814, were of a different cast. The high bounty and the love of country induced the embargoed sailor to turn soldier; to these were added young mechanics and the sons of farmers. These were men of good habits, and of calculation. They looked forward to their bounty of land, with a determination of settling on their farms at the close of the war. These were moral men, and they raised the character of the soldier and of their country. These were the men who conquered at Chippewa, Bridgewater, Erie and Plattsburg. Of such men was composed that potent army of well-disciplined militia, who reposed within twenty miles of the sea shores of New England—especially of Massachusetts and Connecticut; and who, had the British attempted a landing, would have met them with the bayonet, at the water's edge, and crimsoned its tide.

Our captivated sailors knew nothing of this fine army; they only knew the first recruits, and it is no wonder they viewed them as their inferiors, as they really were. Even the officers were, generally speaking, much inferior to those who closed the war. The American sailor appears to be a careless, unthinking, swearing fellow; but he is generally much better than he appears. He is generally marked with honor, generosity and honesty. A ship's crew soon assimilates, and they are all brother tars, embarked together in the same bottom and in the same pursuit of interest, curiosity or fame; while the rigid discipline of an army does not admit of this association and assimilation. A sailor, therefore, greets a

sailor as his brother; but has not yet learned to greet a soldier as his brother; nor has the American soldier ever felt the fraternal attachment to the sailor. It should be the policy of our rulers and military commanders to assimilate the American soldier and sailor; and there is little doubt but that they will amalgamate in time. In France the soldier looks down upon the sailor; in England and in America, the sailor looks down on the soldier. We must learn them to march arm in arm.

Confinement, dirtiness, and deprivations have an evil operation on the mind. I have observed some who had a little refinement of manners at the commencement of their captivity, and regarded the situation and feelings of others near them with complacency, have lost it all, and sunk into a state of misanthropy. We Americans exercise too little ceremony at best, but some of our prisoners lost all deference and respect for their countrymen, and became mere hogs, the stronger pushing the weaker aside, to get the most swill.

> "Jove fix'd it certain that the very day
> Made man a slave, took half his worth away."—*Homer.*

All our industrious men were well behaved, and all our idle men were hoggish. Some of our countrymen worked very neatly in bone, out of which material they built ships, and carved images and snuff boxes and tobacco boxes, and watch cases. Some covered boxes, in a very neat manner, with straw. The men thus employed formed a strong contrast to those who did nothing, or who followed up gambling. Our ship afforded striking instances of the pernicious effects of idleness, and of the beneficial effects of industry. We on board the *Crown Prince* instructed the boys; but in this ship, there has been no attention paid to them, and they are, upon the whole, as vicious in their conduct, and as profane in their language, as any boys I ever saw. Frenchmen are bad companions for American boys. They can teach them more than they ever thought of in their own country.

In January last, three hundred and sixty American prisoners

were sent on board this ship. Great mortality prevailed among the Danish prisoners, prior to the arrival of our countrymen, on board the *Bahama.* The Danes occupied her main deck, while we occupied the lower one. When our poor fellows were tumbled from out of one ship into this they had not sufficient clothes to cover their shivering limbs in this coldest month of the year. They were, indeed, objects of compassion, emaciated, pale, shuddering, low spirited and their constitutions sadly broken down. Their system was not strong enough to resist any impression, especially the contagion of the jail fever, under which the Danes were dying by dozens. Out of three hundred and sixty-one Americans, who came last on board, eighty-four were, in the course of three months, buried in the surrounding marshes, the burying place of the prison ships. I may possibly forgive, but I never can forget the unfeeling conduct of the British on this occasion. Why send men on board a crowded prison-ship, that they knew was infected with a mortal contagion? Their government must have known the inevitable consequences of putting three hundred debilitated men on board an infected ship, where there were not enough well to attend on the sick. If we Americans ever treated British prisoners in our hands in this cruel manner, the facts have never reached my ears. Here was an opportunity for redeeming their blasted reputation, for the horrors of their old *Jersey* prison ship, in the Revolutionary War. But they supposed that our affairs were so low, and their own so glorious, that there was no room for retaliation. The surrounding marshes were already unhealthy, without adding the poison of human bodies, which were every hour put into them. Several persons, now prisoners here, and I rank myself among that number, had a high idea of British humanity prior to our captivity; but we have been compelled to change our opinions of the character of the people from whom we descended. The commander of the *Bahama,* Mr. W. is a passionate and very hot-tempered man, but is, upon the whole, an humane one. We have more to praise than to blame in his conduct towards us. He is not ill-

disposed to the Americans generally, and wishes for a lasting peace between the two contending nations. His mate is the reverse of all this, especially when he is overcharged with liquor.

As characteristic of some of our imprudent countrymen, I insert the following anecdote. The *Belleceau,*[1] (or Bellauxceau) prison ship, lay next to us. She was filled with Norwegians, who were detained in England, while Norway adhered to a king of their own choice. The commander of her was a meddlesome, fractious, foolish old fellow, who was continually overlooking us and hailing our commander, to inform him if any one smuggled a bottle of rum from the market boats. His Norwegians gave him no trouble, they were a peaceable, subservient people, with no fun in their constitutions, nor any jovial cast in their composition. They were very different from the British or American sailor, who will never be baulked of his fun, if the Devil stands at the door. This imprudent, meddling old commander of the *Bellauxceau,* was forever informing the officer of the deck of every little pickadillo of the American prisoners; and he, of course, got the hearty ill will of all the Americans in the ship *Bahama.* He once saw a marine connive at the passing a couple of bottles of liquor through the lower ports, and he hailed the commander and informed him of it, and the marine was immediately punished for it. This roused the Americans to revenge; for the British soldier, or marine, is so much of a slave that revenge never dare enter his head. Retaliation belongs alone to the free and daring American. He alone enjoys the *lex talionis,* and glories in carrying it into execution.

Fish and *potatoes* constituted the diet of the following day. What does our "dare-devils" do but reserve all their potatoes to serve as cold shot to fire at the fractious commander of their next neighbor, the *Bellauxceau.* Accordingly when they observed the old man stubbing backwards and forwards his quarter deck, and stopping now and then to peek over to our ship to see if we smug-

[1] Belisarius, probably, or Belliqueux, a ship taken from the French.

gled a bottle of liquor, they gave him a volley of potatoes, which was kept up until the veteran commander hailed our captain, and told him that if the Americans did not cease their insult he would order his marines to fire upon them; but his threatenings produced no other effect than that of increasing the shower of potatoes; so that this brave British tar was compelled to seek shelter in his cabin; and then the potato battery ceased its fire. When all was quiet, the old gentleman seized the opportunity of pushing on board of us. When he came on our quarter deck, rage stopped all power of utterance, he foamed and stamped like a mad man. At length he asked Mr. Wilson how he could permit a body of prisoners under his command and control to insult one of his majesty's officers in his own ship? To which Mr. Wilson replied that he should use his influence to prevent a repetition of the insult, and restore harmony, and that he was sorry that his men should get into any difficulty with those of another ship; and he recommended moderation; but the old commander swore and raved terribly, when our worthy protector reminded him that he was not on his own quarter deck. The coolness of Mr. Wilson still further enraged our exasperated neighbor, and he left the ship execrating every one on board, and swearing that he would make complaint to the commodore.

When the prisoners saw how their own commander viewed the interference of another, they collected all the potatoes they could find, and I am sorry to add, pieces of coal, and as soon as he left the side of the *Bahama,* they pelted him till he fairly skulked under cover in his own prison ship. He directly drew his marines up in battle array on his quarter deck, when the captain of the *Bahama* seeing his folly, and knowing his disposition, exerted himself to make every American go below, and enjoined upon them a cessation of potatoes. We gained, however, more by this short war than most of the nations of the world, for it entirely removed the cause for which we took up potatoes against one of his Britannick Majesty's officers, within ten leagues of the capital of his empire.

I overheard Capt. Wilson say to the second in command, "these Americans are the sauciest dogs I ever saw; but damn me if I can help liking them, nor can I ever hate men who are so much like ourselves—they are John Bull all over."

In a course of kind and flattering treatment our countrymen were orderly and easily governed; but when they conceived themselves ill treated you might as well attempt to govern so many East India tygers. The British officers in this river discovered this, and dreaded their combined anger; and yet the Americans are seldom or ever known to carry their vengeance to blood and murder, like the Spaniard, Italian and Portuguese.

A Swedish frigate is just arrived in the reach, to take away those good boys the Norwegians. King Bernadotte sent them two and sixpence a piece, to secure their affections, and provide them with some needed articles for their passage to Norway. A cartel is hourly expected from London, to take home some of their soldiers. The *Leyden,* an old Dutch 64, is preparing at the Nore to take us away.

We are induced to believe that our emancipation is nigh. We are every day expecting that we, too, shall be sent home; but this hope, instead of inspiring us with joy and gladness, has generated sourness and discontent. It seems that the government of the United States, give a preference to those who had enlisted in the public service over such as were in privateers. We have felt this difference all along. Again, the government are disposed to liberate the soldiers before the sailors, because their sufferings are greater than those of sailors, from their former mode of life and occupations. They were farmers or mechanics, or any thing but seamen; and this makes their residence on ship-board very irksome; whereas, the sailor is at home on the deck or hold of the ship. Most of these soldiers were from the states of Pennsylvania and New York, and many from the western parts of the Union. These

men could not bear confinement like sailors, neither could they bear a short allowance of food, nor could they shirk for themselves like a Jack tar. A sailor could endure with a degree of patience, restraints and deprivations that were death to landsmen. Many of these youthful soldiers had not long left their native habitations and parental care, when they were captured; their morals and manners were purer than those of sailors. Such young men suffered not only in their health, but in their feelings, and many sunk under their accumulated miseries; for nourished by indulgence, in the midst of abundance, many of them died for want of sufficient food. These miserable beings were, as they ought to be, the first objects of the solicitude of government.

The prisoners were seen here and there, collected in squads, chewing together the end of discontent, and grumbling at the imagined partiality and injustice of their rulers. These discontents and bickerings too often damped the joy of their prospect of liberation from captivity. The poor privateersmen had most reason for complaining, as they found themselves neglected by one side, and despised by the other.

The sufferings of soldiers, many of whom were militia, who were taken on the frontiers of Canada, are not to be withheld from the public. They were first stripped by the savages in the British service, and then driven before them, half naked, to the city of Quebec; from thence they were sent, in ill-provided transports, to Halifax, suffering all the way, the torments of hunger and thirst. When they arrived at Melville prison, they were shocking objects to the prisoners they found there; emaciated, weak, dirty, sickly and but half clothed, they excited in us all commiseration for their great misery; and indignation, contempt and revenge towards the nation who could allow such barbarity. The cruel deception practised on their embarkation for England, instead of going home; their various miseries on ship-board, where as landsmen, they underwent infinitely more than the sailors; for many of them never had

seen the salt ocean; and their close confinement in the hold of a ship, gave them the idea of a floating hell. The captivity of the sailors was sufficiently distressing; but it was nothing to that of the wretched landsmen, who considered a ship, at all times, a kind of dungeon. The transporting our soldiers to England, and their sufferings during their passage and while confined in that country, has engendered a hatred against the British nation that ages will not obliterate, and time scarcely diminish. We Americans can never be justly accused of want of humanity to the English prisoner.

I have frequently thought that the over-rated and highly boasted British bravery and humanity, would find their graves in America. The treatment these soldiers experienced has stigmatised the English character, and deservedly so. It is not in the power of words, and scarcely in the power of the painter's pencil, to convey an idea of their wretchedness. They were covered with rags, dirt and vermin. They were, to us, objects of pity, but to all others objects of disgust; even we, their brothers, recoiled at times on approaching them. Was there any design in this? Did our enemies wish to impress their countrymen with an abhorrence of a Yankee? How else can we account for a treatment which our people never experienced when prisoners of the Indians? No—the savages never starve their prisoners, nor deprive them the use of water. Dispirited, and every way disheartened, our poor fellows had, generally speaking, the aspect of a cowardly, low-spirited race of men, and much inferior to the British. We here saw how wretched circumstances, in a short time, debases a brave and high spirited man. When people from the shore visited our ship and saw our miserable soldiers, we do not wonder that they despised them. We sometimes had the mortification of hearing remarks in the Scotch accent, to this effect: "So, these are samples of the brave Yankees that took the *Guerrière* and *Java;* it proves to a demonstration, that the American frigates were manned with British deserters."

The sailors often tried to spirit up the soldiers and to encourage

them to cleanliness; but it was in vain, as most of them were depressed below the elasticity of their brave souls; yet amidst their distress, not a man of them would listen to proposals to enter the British service. Every one preferred death, and even wished for it. The Americans are a clean people in their persons as well as in their houses. None of them are so poor as to live in cabins like the Irish, or in cottages like the Scotch; but they are brought up in houses having chimnies, glass windows, separate and convenient rooms and good bedding; and to all these comfortable things we must add that the poorest of our countrymen eat meat once every day, and most of them twice. To young men so brought up and nourished, a British captivity on board their horrid transports, and even on board their prison-ships, is worse than death. If we Americans treat British prisoners as they treat ours, let it be published to the world to our disgrace. Should the war continue many years, I predict that few Americans will be taken alive by the English.

After these poor fellows had received money and clothing from our government, they became cheerful, clean and many of them neat, and were no bad specimens of American soldiery. We are sorry to remark that there was observed something repulsive between the soldier and the sailor. The soldier thought himself better than the Jack tar, while the sailor felt himself, on board ship, a better fellow than the soldier; one was a fish in the water, the other a lobster out of the water. The sailors always took the lead, because they were at home; while the dispirited landsman felt himself a stranger in an enemy's land, even among his countrymen. It would be well if all our sea and land commanders would exert themselves to break down the partition wall that is growing up between our sailors and soldiers; they should be constantly reminded that they are all children of one and the same great family, whereof the President of the United States is father; that they have all been taught to read the same Bible, and to obey the same great moral law of loving one another. I observed with pain that nothing vexed a sailor more, than

to be called by a brother tar, a soldier-looking son of a ——. This term of contempt commonly led to blows. This mutual dislike bred difficulties in the government of ourselves, and sometimes defeated our best regulations; for it split us into parties, and then we behaved as bad as our superiors and richer brethren do on shore, neglecting the general interest to indulge our own private views, and spirit of revenge. I thought our ship often resembled our republic in miniature, for human nature is the same always, and only varies its aspect from situation and circumstances.

It is now the latter end of September; the weather pretty pleasant, but not equal to our fine Septembers and Octobers in New England. We are every hour expecting orders to quit this river, and return to our own dear country.

## CHAPTER XI

*OCTOBER 2d, 1814.*—We were now ordered to pick up our duds and get all ready to embark in certain gun-brigs that had anchored along side of us; and an hundred of us were soon put on board, and the tide favoring, we gently drifted down the river Medway. It rained, and not being permitted to go below, and being thinly clad, we were wet to the skin. When the rain ceased, our commander went below, and returned in a short time gaily equipped in his full uniform, cockade and dirk. He mounted the poop, where he strutted about, sometimes viewing himself, and now and then eyeing us, as if to see if we, too, admired him. He was about five feet high, with thick broad shoulders, and portly belly. We concluded that he would afford us some fun; but we were mistaken; for with the body of Dr. Slop, he bore a round, ruddy, open and smiling countenance, expressive of good nature and urbanity.[1] The crew said that although he was no seaman, *he was a man,* and that a better fellow never eat the king's bread; that they were happy under his command; and the only dread they had was, that he or they should be transferred to another ship. Does not this prove that seamen can be better governed by kindness and good humor than by the boatswain's cat? We would ask two of our own naval commanders, B.[2] and C.[3] whether they had not better try the experiment? We should be very sorry if the infant navy of our young country should have the character of too much severity of discipline. To say that it is requisite is a libel on our national character. Slavish minds alone require the lash.

On board this brig were two London mechanics, recently pressed

[1] He was no bad resemblance of our Captain C.

[2] Bainbridge.

[3] Chauncey.

in the streets of the capital of the English nation—a nation that has long boasted of its liberty and humanity. These cocknies wore long coats, drab-coloured velvet breeches, and grey stockings. They were constantly followed by the boatswain's mate, who often impressed his lessons, and excited their activity with a rope's end which he carried in his hat. The poor fellows were extremely anxious to avoid such repeated hard arguments, and they kept at as great a distance from their tyrant as possible, who seemed to delight in beating them. It appeared to me to be far outdoing, in cruelty, the Algerines. They look melancholy, and at times very sad. May America never become the greatest of naval powers, if to attain it she must allow a brutal sailor to treat a citizen, kidnapped from his family in the streets of our cities, worse than we use a dog. I again repeat it, for the thousandth time, the English are a hard-hearted, cruel and barbarous race; and on this account alone I have often been ashamed that we, Americans, descended mostly from them. When a man is ill used it invites others to insult him. One of our prisoners, who had been treated with a drink of grog, took out his knife and, as the cockney's face was the other way, cut off one skirt of his long coat. This joke excited peals of laughter. When the poor Londoner saw that this was done by a roguish American, at the instigation of his own countrymen, the tear stood in his eye. Even our jolly big bellied captain enjoyed the joke, and ordered the boatswain's mate to cut off the other skirt, who, after viewing him amidst shouts of laughter, damned him for a land lubber, and said, now he had lost his ring-tail, he looked like a gentlemen sailor.

Although our good natured captain laughed at this joke, I confess I could not; all the horrors of impressment rushed on my mind. This mechanic may have left a wife and children suffering and starving, from having her husband and their father kidnapped, like a negro on the coast of Guinea, and held in worse than negro slavery. But this is Old England, the residence of liberty and

equal laws; and the bulwark of our holy religion! The crimes of nations are punished in this world; and we may venture to predict, that *the impressment of seamen,* and *cruel military punishments,* will operate the downfall of this splendid impostor, whose proper emblem is a bloated figure, seated on a throne made of dead men's bones, with a crown on its head, a sword in one hand and a cup filled with the tears of widows and orphans in the other.

We passed by Sheerness, and in our passage to the Nore came near several hulks filled with convicts. We soon came along side the *Leyden,* an old Dutch 64, fitted up with berths, eight feet by six, so as to contain six persons; but they were nearly all filled by prisoners who came before us, so that we were obliged to shirk wherever we could.

We found the captain of the *Leyden* very much such a man as the commander of the *Malabar.* Our allowance of food was as short as he could make it, and our liquor ungenerous. He said we were a damn set of rebel Yankees that lived too well, which made us saucy. The first lieutenant was a kind and humane gentleman, but his captain was the reverse. He would hear no complaints and threatened to put the bearer of them in irons.

The countenance, and whole form of this man was indicative of malice; his very step was that of an abrupt and angry tyrant. His gloomy visage was that of an hardened jailor, and he bore towards us the same sort of affection which was experienced from the refugees in Nova Scotia. He caused a marine to be most severely flogged for selling one of the prisoners a little tobacco, which he saved out of his own allowance. The crew were forbidden to speak with any of us; but, when they could with safety, they described him to be the most odious of tyrants, and the most malicious of men. They said he never appeared pleased only when his men were suffering the agonies of the boatswain's lashes. In this he resembled the demons among the damned.

Upon calling over our names, and parading ourselves before Capt. Davie, we could discover, in a second, the harsh temper of the man. We at length weighed anchor, passed a fleet of men of war, and in a few days arrived in Plymouth harbor. The captain went immediately on shore and left the command to his worthy and humane lieutenant. The next day a great many boats came off to us filled with Cyprian dames. They were generally healthy, rosy looking lasses. Their number increased every hour, until there were as many on board of us as there were men. In short, every man who paid the waterman half a crown had a "wife," so that the ship, belonging to the "bulwark of our religion," exhibited such a scene as is described by the navigators who have visited the South-Sea Islands. We read, with surprise and pity, the conduct of the female sex, when European ships visit the islands in the Pacific ocean; and we are unwilling to give credit to all we read, because we Americans never fail to annex the idea of modesty to that of a woman; for female licentiousness is very rarely witnessed in the New World. This has rendered the accounts of navigators, in a degree, incredible; but we see the same thing in the ports of England—a land of Christians—renowned for its bishops and their church, and for the moral writings and sermons, and for their Bible societies, and religious institutions, and for their numerous moral essays, and chaste poetical writings. Yes, Christian reader! in this religious island, whereof George the 3d is king, and Charlotte the queen, the young females crowd the prison ships and take for "husbands" the ragged American prisoners, provided they can get a few shillings by it. What are we to think of the state of society in England, when two or three sisters leave the house of their parents, and pass a week on board of a newly arrived ship? What can be the sentiments of the daughters? What the feelings of their mothers, their fathers and their brothers? In the South Sea Islands, young females know not what modesty means; neither that nor chastity is a virtue in those regions. But it is not quite so in England; there this lewd conduct is a mark of debasement, deprav-

ity and vice. The sea-ports of England and the streets of her capital, and indeed of all her large cities, are filled with handsome women who offer themselves as "wives" to men they never saw before, for a few shillings; and yet this is the country of which our reverend doctors from the pulpit assure us, contains more religion and morality than any other of the same number of inhabitants; nay, more, our governor has proclaimed it to the world over, as being the very bulwark of the religion we profess. If cruelty to prisoners, cruelty to their own soldiers, if kidnapping their mechanics by press gangs, if shocking barbarity be exercised towards prisoners, and if open, shameless lewdness, mark and disgrace their sea-ports, their capital and all their large cities, are the modest and correct people inhabiting the towns and villages of the United States, to be affronted by being told publicly that they have less religion, less morality than the people of England? How long shall we continue to be abused by folly and presumption? We Americans are yet a modest, clean, and moral people, as much so as the Swiss in Europe, and we feel ourselves offended and disgusted when our blind guides tell us to follow the example of the English in their manners and sexual conduct. Could I allow myself to particularise the conduct of the fair sex, who crowd on board every recently arrived ship, and who swarm on the shores, my readers would confess that few scenes of the kind could exceed it. The freedom of the American press will give to posterity a just picture of British morals, in the reigns of George the 3d and 4th.

While lying in Plymouth harbor we received the news of the capture of the City of Washington, and the burning of its public buildings. Every body around us believed that America was conquered, and the war over. After we had read the account in the newspaper, the Lieutenant came down among us and talked with us on the event, and asked us if we did not think that America would now submit and make peace on such terms as Great Britain should propose. We all told him with one voice, no! no! and that

the possession of the whole sea-coast could not produce that effect. We explained to him the situation of Washington, and described the half-built city, and soon convinced him that the capture of Washington was by no means an event of half the importance of the capture of Albany, or New York or Baltimore. We all agreed that it would make a great sound in England and throughout Europe, but that it was in fact of little consequence to the United States.

About a week after we entered Plymouth harbor, two hundred of us were drafted to be sent to Dartmoor Prison, instead of being sent, as we expected, to America.

We were conveyed in boats, and saw as we passed a number of men of war on the stocks; and, among others, the *Lord Vincent,* pierced for 120 guns. One of our prisoners told the lieutenant that he was in that battle with Lord St. Vincent, and of course helped him gain the victory, and here he was now sailing by a most noble ship, built in honor of that famous admiral, on his way to a doleful prison. This man had been pressed on board a British man of war, and was given up as such; but instead of being sent home as he ought, he was detained a prisoner of war; and yet this unfortunate man exposed his life in fighting for the British off Cape St. Vincent, as much as the noble Lord himself. Such is the difference of rewards in this chequered world!

My mind was too much oppressed with the melancholy prospect of Dartmoor prison, to notice particularly the gallant show of ships, and the beautiful scenery which the dock and bay of Plymouth afforded. When we landed a short distance from the dock, we were received by a file of soldiers, or rather two files, between which we marched on. This was the first time we touched the soil of England with our feet, after lying under its shores nearly a year. It excited singular and pleasant sensations to be once more permitted to walk on the earth, although surrounded by

soldiers and going to prison. The old women collected about us with their cakes and ale, and as we all had à little money we soon emptied their jugs and baskets; and their cheering beverage soon changed our sad countenances, and as we marched on we cheered each other. Our march drew to the doors and windows the enchanting sight of fair ladies; compared with our dirty selves, they looked like angels peeping out of Heaven; and yet they were neither handsomer or neater than our sweethearts and sisters in our own dear country.

After we left the street we found the road extremely dusty, which rendered it very unpleasant in walking close to each other. Before we got half way to the prison, there was a very heavy shower of rain, so that by the time we arrived there we looked as if we had been wallowing in the mud. Our unfeeling conductors marched us nine miles before they allowed us to rest, never once considering how unfit we were, from our long confinement, for travelling. Where we were allowed to stop, a butt of beer was placed in a cart for sale. Had British prisoners been marching through New-England, a butt of beer or good cider would have been placed for them free of all expense; but old England is not New-England by a great deal, whatever Governor Strong may think of his adorable country of kings, bishops and missionary societies. Here a fresh escort of soldiers relieved those who brought us from Plymouth. The commanding officer of this detachment undertook to drive us from the beer-cart before all of us had a taste of it; he rode in among us, and flourished his sword, with a view to frighten us; but we refused to stir till we were ready, and some of our company called him a damned lobster-backed ——for wishing to drive us away before every one had his drink. The man was perplexed and knew not what to do. At last the booby did what he ought to have done at first—forced the beerseller to drive off his cart; but it is the fate of British officers of higher rank than this one, to think and act at last of that which they ought to have

thought and acted upon at first. They are no match for the Yankees, in contrivance or in execution. This beer-barrel is an epitome of all their conduct in their war with America. What old woman put the idea into this officer's head I know not, but it is a fact, as soon as the beer-barrel was driven off, we were all ready to march off too! And few companies of vagabonds in England ever marched off to prison in better spirits; we cheered one another and laughed at our profound leader, until we came in sight of the black, bleak, and barren moor, without a solitary bush or blade of grass. Some of our prisoners swore that we had marched the whole length of England and got into Scotland. We all agreed that it was not credible that such a hideous, barren spot could be any where found in England.

Our old men-of-wars-men suffered the most. Many of these had not set their feet on the earth for seven years, and they had lost in a measure, the natural operation of their feet and legs. These naval veterans loitered behind, attended by a guard. In ascending a hill we were some distance from the main body, and by turning a corner the rear was concealed from the van. Two young men took advantage of this, and jumped over a wall and lay snug under it; but being observed, the guard fired, which alarmed those in front, when some soldiers pursued them, and seeing the impossibility of escaping, the young men jumped over the wall again and mixed in with their companions without their being able to identify their persons. Our driver was extremely perplexed and alarmed at our daring attempts.

On crawling up the long and ragged hill, we became wearied, and refused to walk so fast as the guard. No prudent officer would have driven men on as we were driven. We should have rested every two or three miles.—The sun was sinking below the horizon when we gained the top of the hill which commanded a view of Dartmoor prison. We passed through a small collection of houses called Princetown, where were two inns. The weather was severe

after the shower, and we saw the dark-hued prisons, whose sombre and doleful aspect chilled our blood. Yonder, cried one of our companions, is the residence of four thousand five hundred men, and in a few minutes we shall add to the number of its wretches. Others said, in that place will be sacrificed the aspiring feelings of youth, and the anxious expectations of relatives. There, said I, shall we bury all the designs of early emulation. I never felt disheartened before. I shed tears when I thought of home and of my wretched situation, and I cursed the barbarity of a people among whom we were driven more like hogs than fellow men and Christians. I had weathered adverse gales with fortitude; and never flinched amidst severities. *"A taut bowstring"* was always my motto; but here I gave way, for a moment, to despair, and wished the string to snap asunder and end my misery; for I had not even the consolation of a criminal going to execution to brace up the cord of life. The idea of lingering out a wretched existence in a doleful prison, dying by piece-meal, my flesh wasting by hunger, my frame exhausted by thirst and my spirits broken down by a tyrant, and by jostling with misfortunes I could not avoid. If death, instead of knocking at my prison door, would enter it at once, I would thank the gaol deliverer. I am now comforted with the conviction that nothing but an early religious education could have preserved me at this, and some other times of my misery, from destroying myself.

We soon arrived at the gates of this very extensive prison, and were admitted into the first yard, for it has several. We there answered to the call of our names; and at length passed through the iron gates to prison No. 7. We requested the turnkey to take in our baggage, as it contained our bedding; but it was neglected, and rained on during the night; for on this bleak and drizzly mountain there are not more than ninety fair days in the year. It took us several days to dry our duds.

The moment we entered the dark prison we found ourselves jammed in with a multitude; one calling us to come this way, an-

other that; some halloing, swearing and cursing, so that I did not know, for a moment, but what I had died through fatigue and hard usage, and was actually in the regions of the damned. Oh, what a horrid night I here passed!

The floors of this reproach to Old England were of stone, damp and mouldy, and smelling like a transport. Here we had to lay down and sleep after a most weary march of fifteen miles. What apology can be made for not having things prepared for our comfort? Those who have been enslaved in Algiers found things very different. The food and the lodging were in every respect superior among the Mahometans, than among these boasting Christians, and their general treatment infinitely more humane; some of our companions had been prisoners among the Barbary powers, and they describe them as vastly more considerate than the English.

After passing a dreadful night, we next day had opportunity of examining our prison. It had iron stancheons, like those in stables for horses, on which hammocks were hung. The windows had iron gratings, and the bars of the doors seemed calculated to resist the force of men and of time. These things had a singular effect on such of us as had, from our childhood, associated the idea of liberty with the name of Old England; but a man must travel beyond the smoke of his own chimney to acquire correct ideas of the characters of men and nations.—We however saw the worst of it at first, for every day our residence appeared less disagreeable.

We arrived here the 11th of October, and our lot was better than that of thirty of our companies, who came on a little after us from Plymouth. These thirty men were sent from the West-Indies, and had no descriptive lists, and it was necessary that these men should be measured and described as to stature, complexion, &c.—Capt. Shortland therefore ordered them to be shut up in the prison No. 6. This was a more cold, dreary and comfortless place than No. 7. Their bed was nothing but the cold damp stones, and being

in total darkness they dare not walk about. These thirty men had been imprisoned at Barbadoes, and they had supposed that when they arrived at this famous birthplace of liberty, they should not be excluded from all her blessings. They had suffered much at Barbadoes, and they expected a different treatment in England; but alas! Capt. Shortland at once dissipated the illusion and shewed himself what Britons really are. The next morning they were taken up to Capt. Shortland's office to be described, and marked and numbered. One of the thirty, an old and respectable Captain of an American ship, complained of his usage, and told Shortland that he had been several times a prisoner of war, but never experienced such barbarous treatment before. The man only replied that their not having their beds was the fault of the Turnkey; as if that could ever be admitted as an excuse among military men.

[For a minute description of Dartmoor Prison, see the engraving.]

Dartmoor is a dreary spot of itself; it is rendered more so by the westerly winds blowing from the Atlantic ocean, which have the same quality and effects as the easterly winds, blowing from the same ocean, are known to have in New-England. This highland receives the sea mist and fogs, and they settle on our skins with a deadly dampness. Here reigns more than two thirds of the year, the *Scotch mist,* which is famous to a proverb. This moor affords nothing for subsistence or pleasure. Rabbits cannot live on it. Birds fly from it, and it is inhabited, according to the belief of the most vulgar, by ghosts and demons; to which will now doubtless be added, the troubled ghosts of the murdered American prisoners; and hereafter will be distinctly seen the tormented spirit of the bloody Capt. Shortland, clanking his chains, weeping, wailing and gnashing his teeth! It is a fact that the market people have not sufficient courage to pass this moor in the night. They are always sure to leave Princetown by daylight, not having the resolution of passing this dreary, barren and heaven-abandoned spot in the dark. Before the bloody massacre of our countrymen, this unhallowed

spot was believed, by common superstition, to belong to the Devil.

Certain it is, that the common people in this neighborhood were impressed with the notion that Dartmoor was a place less desirable to mortals, and more under the influence of evil spirits, than any other spot in England. I shall only say that I found it, take it all in all, a less disagreeable prison than the ships; the life of a prudent, industrious, well-behaved man might here be rendered pretty easy, for a prison life, as was the case with some of our own countrymen and some Frenchmen; but the young, the idle, the giddy, fun-making youth generally reaped such fruit as he sowed. Gambling was the wide inlet to vice and disorder, and in this Frenchmen took the lead. These men would play away every thing they possessed beyond the clothes to keep them decent. They have been known to game away a month's provision, and when they had lost it would shirk and steal for a month after for their subsistence. A man with some money in his pocket might live pretty well through the day in Dartmoor Prison, there being shops and stalls where every little article could be obtained; but added to this we had a good and constant market, and the bread and meat supplied by government were not bad; and as good I presume as that given to British prisoners by our own government; had our lodging and prison-house been equal to our food, I never should have complained. The establishment was blessed with a good man for a physician, named M'Garth,[1] an Irishman, a tall lean gentleman with one eye, but of a warm and good heart. We never shall cease to admire his disposition, nor forget his humanity.

The Frenchmen and our prisoners did not agree very well. They quarrelled and sometimes fought, and they carried their differences to that length that it was deemed proper to erect a wall to separate them, like so many game cocks in different yards. When this dépôt was garrisoned by Highlanders, these Scotchmen took part with the Americans against the French. Here the old

[1] Properly Magrath.

Presbyterian principle of affinity operated against the papal man of sin. It cannot be denied there is a deep-rooted hatred between the Briton and the Frenchman.

While at Dartmoor Prison, there came certain French officers wearing the white cockade; their object seemed to be to converse with the prisoners and to persuade them to declare for Louis XVIII; but they could not prevail; the Frenchmen shouted *vive l'Empereur!* Their attachment to Bonaparte was remarkably strong. He must have been a man of wonderful powers to attach all ranks so strongly to him. Before the officers left the place, these Frenchmen hoisted up a little dog with the white cockade tied under his tail. Soon after this the French officers, who appeared to be men of some consideration, left the prison.

I have myself had nothing particular to complain of, but the prisoners here speak of Captain Shortland as the most detestable of men, and they bestow on him the vilest and most abusive epithets. The prisoners began to dig a hole under prison No. 6, and had made considerable progress towards the outer wall, when a man, who came from Newburyport betrayed them to Capt. Shortland. This man had, it was said, changed his name in America on account of forgery.—Be that as it may, he was sick at Chatham, where we paid him every attention and subscribed money for procuring him the means of comfort. Shortland gave him two guineas and sent him to Ireland or the prisoners would have hanged him for a traitor to his countrymen. The hypocritical scoundrel's excuse was conscience and humanity, for he told Shortland that we intended to murder him, and every one else in the neighborhood. Shortland said he knew better; that he was fearful of our escaping, but never had any apprehensions of personal injury from an American; that they delighted in plaguing him and contriving the means of escape, but he never saw a cruel or murderous disposition in any of them.

The instant Capt. Shortland discovered the attempt to escape by

digging a subterraneous passage, he drove all the prisoners into the yard of No. 1, making them take their baggage with them; and in a few days after, when he thought they might have begun another hole but had not time to complete it, he moved them into another yard and prison, and so he kept moving them from one prison to the other and took great credit to himself for his contrivance, and in this way he harassed our poor fellows until the day before our arrival at the prison. He had said that he was resolved not to suffer them to remain in the same building and yard more than ten days at a time, and this was a hardship they resolved not voluntarily to endure; for the removal of hammocks and furniture and every little article, was an intolerable grievance; and the more the prisoners appeared pestered, the greater was the enjoyment of Shortland. It was observed that whenever, in these removals, there were much jamming and squeezing and contentions for places, it gave this man pleasure; but that the ease and comfort of the prisoners gave him pain. The united opinion of the prisoners was, that he was a very bad hearted man. He would often stand on the military walk, or in the market square, whenever there was any difference or tumult, and enjoy the scene with malicious satisfaction. He appeared to delight in exposing prisoners in rainy weather, without sufficient reason. This has sent many of our poor fellows to the grave, and would have sent more had it not been for the benevolence and skill of Dr. McGarth. We thought Miller and Osmore skilled in tormenting, but Shortland exceeded them both by a devilish deal. The prisoners related to me several instances of cool and deliberate acts of torment, disgraceful to a government of Christians; for the character and general conduct of this commander could not be concealed from them. He wore the British colours on his house, and acted under this emblem of sovereignty.

It was customary to count over the prisoners twice a week; and after the sweepers had brushed out the prisons, the guard would send to the commander that they were all ready for his inspection;

on these occasions, Shortland very seldom omitted staying away as long as he conveniently could, merely to vex the prisoners, and they at length expressed their sense of it; for he would keep them standing until they were weary. At last they determined not to submit to it; and after waiting a sufficient time, they made a simultaneous rush forward, and so forced their passage back into their prison-house. To punish this act, Shortland stopped the country people from coming into market for two days. At this juncture we arrived; and as the increase of numbers increased our obstinacy, the Captain began to relax, and after that he came to inspect the prisoners as soon as they were paraded for that purpose. It was easy to perceive that the prisoners had, in a great measure conquered the hard hearted and vindictive Capt. Shortland.

The roof of the prison to which we were consigned, was very leaky, and it rained on this dreary mountain almost continually; place our beds wherever we could, they were generally wet. We represented this to Capt. Shortland, and to our complaint was added that of the worthy and humane Dr. M'Garth, but it produced no effect, so that to the ordinary miseries of a prison we for a long time endured the additional one of wet lodgings, which sent many of our countrymen to their graves.

We owe much to the humanity of Dr. M'Garth, a very worthy man, and a native of Ireland. Was M'Garth commander of this dépôt, there would be no difficulty with the prisoners. They would obey him through affection and respect; because he considers us rational beings, with minds cultivated like his own and susceptible of gratitude, and habituated to do and receive acts of kindness; whereas the great Capt. Shortland considers us all as a base set of men, degraded below the rank of Englishmen, towards whom nothing but rigor should be extended. He acted on this false idea, and has reaped the bitter fruit of his own ill judged conduct. He might, by kind and respectful usage, have led the Americans to any thing just and honorable, but it was not in his

power, nor all the Captains in his nation to force them to knowledge and quietly submit to his tyranny.

Dr. M'Garth was a very worthy man, and every prisoner loved him; but M'Farlane, his assistant, a Scotchman, was the reverse; in dressing, or bleeding, or in any operation, he would handle a prisoner with a brutal roughness, that conveyed the idea that he was giving way to the feelings of revenge, or national hatred. Cannot a Scotchman testify his *unnatural* loyalty to the present reigning family of England without treating an American with cruelty and contempt?

Dr. Dobson, the superintendent-physician of the Hospital ship at Chatham, was a very worthy and very skillful gentleman. We Americans ought never to forget his goodness towards us. Some of us esteem him full as high as Dr. M'Garth, and some more highly. They are both however worthy and deserve well of this country. There is nothing men vary more in than in their opinion of and attachment to physicians. Dobson and M'Garth deserve medals of gold and hearts of gratitude, for their kind attention to us all.

## CHAPTER XII

THE establishment at Chatham is broken up, and the last of the prisoners were marched from Plymouth to this place, the 30th of November. They were marched from that place to this in one day, half-leg deep in mud. Some lost their shoes; others to preserve them took them off, and carried them in their hands. When they arrived here they were indeed objects of pity; nevertheless they were immediately shut up in a cold, damp prison, without any bedding, or any of the ordinary conveniences, until they could be examined and described in the commander's books; after which they were permitted to mix with the rest of their countrymen. We found many of them, the day after their arrival, unable to walk, by reason of their too long protracted march in a very bad road. A prudent drover would not have risked his cattle by driving them through such a road in a few hours. Such a thing never was done in America, with British prisoners.

I find all the prisoners here deeply exasperated against Captain Shortland, and too much prejudiced to hear anything in his favor. I presume they have reason for it. As I have but just arrived, I have had but little opportunity of seeing and judging his conduct. Instead of his being a bad hearted man, I am disposed to believe that the fault is in his understanding and education. I suspect that he is a man of narrow views; that he has not sufficient information or capacity, to form a right judgment of the peculiar cast and character of the people under his charge. He has never, perhaps, considered that these descendants of Englishmen, the free inhabitants of the New World, have been born and brought up in, if we may speak so, Indian freedom; on which freedom has been superinduced an education purely democratic, in schools where degrading punishments are unknown, where if a schoolmaster exercised the sever-

ity common in England and German schools, they would tie the master's hands with his own bell-rope. He has never considered that our potent militia choose their own officers, and that the people choose all their officers and leaders from among themselves; and there are very few men indeed, none perhaps, in New England, who would refuse to shake hands with a decent yeoman. It is probable that Capt. Shortland has never reflected that there are fewer grades of men between the lowest white man under his charge, and the highest in America, than there are between him and the highest ranks in England. He has never considered the similarity between the ancient Roman republican and the republican of the United States of America; nor why both republics deemed it abhorrent to inflict stripes on their citizens. Shortland had not sufficient sagacity to discover that playfulness, fun and frolic formed a strong trait in the character of the American sailor and militia man, for they had hardly become what is called in Europe soldiers; drilling and discipline had not obliterated the free and easy carriage of a bold and fearless Yankee.

Sir Guy Carleton, afterwards Lord Dorchester, was Governor of Canada during the Revolutionary War, and proved himself a wise man. He penetrated the American character, and treated the American prisoners captured in Canada accordingly; and by doing so he came near breaking up our army; for our prisoners were softened and subdued by his kindness and humanity; he sent them home well clothed, and well fed, and most of them declared they never would fight against Sir Guy Carleton. He knew the American character thoroughly, and was convinced that harshness and severity would have no other effect than to excite revenge and hatred. On the other hand our prisoners could have no very great respect for a *captain,* an officer which they themselves created by their votes at pleasure; add to this, that several of the prisoners had the title of captain in their own country. Had the commander of Dartmoor Prison been an old woman, the Americans would have respected her

sex and years, and obeyed her commands; but they despised and hated Shortland for his deficiency of head, heart and education; from all which originated those sad events which have disgraced one nation, and exasperated the other forever. Shortland may be excused, when it is considered that England lost her colonies by not studying the American character; and the same inattention to the natural operations of the human heart is now raising her gradually up to be the first naval power on the terraqueous globe; and thus much for contempt.

There was an order that all lights should be put out by eight o'clock at night in every prison, and it was doubtless proper; but this order was carried into execution with a rigor bordering on barbarity. On the least glimpse of light discoverable in the prison, the guard would fire in amongst us, and several were shot. Several Frenchmen were wounded. This story was told that a French captain of a privateer, the night after he first came, was undressing him, by his hammock, when the sentry cried, *"Out lights!"* The Frenchman not understanding English, kept it burning; the sentry fired, and scattered his brains over the place; but this did not occur while I was there; but this I aver, that several were shot, and I wondered that many were not killed, and I was shocked at the barbarity of the order.

About this time, the Derbyshire militia were relieved by a regiment of regulars, who had been in Spain. They were chiefly Irish, and treated us better than we were treated by the militia. They had infinitely more generosity and manliness, as well as more intelligence. They acted plays in the cock-loft of No. 5. They have good music and tolerable scenery, and charge six pence for admission, to defray the expense. This is a very pleasant way of making the British soldier forget his slavery, and the American prisoner his bondage. These generous hearted Irishmen would sometimes give us a song in honor of *our* naval victories. O, how we did long

to be at liberty, when we heard songs in honor of the *Constitution* and of the *United States.*

Some men are about to be sent off to Dartmouth, to return to the United States; this has occasioned us to write letters to our friends and connexions; but Capt. Shortland is very jealous on this head; he will not allow us to write to any of the neighboring country people. The English dare not trust their own people, much more the American captives.

This is the latter part of the month of November; and the weather has been generally rainy, dark, dismal and foggy. Sometimes we could hardly see the sentinels on the walls. Sorrow and sadness within, gloom, fog, or drizzly rain without. If the commissioners at Ghent do not soon make peace, nor establish an exchange, we shall be lost to our country and to hope. The newspapers now and then enliven us with the prospect of peace. We are told that growing dissentions at Vienna will induce Great Britain to get rid of her Transatlantic enemy, in order to combat those nearer home. Whenever we see in the newspapers an article captioned "*News from Ghent,*" we devour it with our eyes, but instead of substance, generally find it empty wind. We are wearied out. I speak for myself, and I hear the same expression from others. Winter is commencing, to add to our miseries. Poor clothing, miserable lodging, poor and inadequate food, long, dismal nights, darkness, foul air, bad smells, the groans of the sick and distressed, the execrations and curses of the half distracted prisoner, the unfeeling conduct of our keepers and commander—all, all, all conspire to fill up the cup of our sorrow; but we hope that one drop will not be added after it is brim full, for then it will run over and death will follow.

*December.* Nothing new worth recording; every day and every night brings the same sad picture, the same heart-sinking impressions. Until now, I could not believe that misfortune and confine-

ment, with a deprivation of the accustomed food, ease and liberty of our own dear country, could have wrought such a change in the human person. The young have not only acquired wrinkles, but appear dried up and contracted in body and mind. I can easily conceive that a few generations of the human species, passed in such misery and confinement, would produce a race of beings very inferior to what we now are. The sailor, however, suffers less in appearance than we landsmen; for my short cruise in a privateer does not entitle me to the name of a sailor. How often have I reflected on my rash adventure! To leave the house of plenty, surrounded with every thing comfortable, merely to change the scene, and see the watery world. To quit my paternal roof, half educated, to dress wounds, and cut off limbs of those who might be mutilated, was about as mad a scheme as ever giddy youth engaged in. But repining will do no good. I must not despair, but make the best of my hard lot. If I have lost a portion of ordinary education I have passed the severer school of misfortune; and should I live to return to America, I must strive to turn these hardships to the best advantage. He who has not met adversity has not seen the most profitable part of human life.

There were times during my captivity, especially in the long and cheerless nights, when home and all its endearments, rushed on my mind, and when I reflected on my then situation, I burst into tears and wept aloud. It was then I was fearful that I should lose my reason, and never recover it. Many a time have I thought myself into a fever, my tongue covered with a furr, and my brain seemed burning up within my skull. It was company that preserved me. Had I been alone I should have been raving distracted. I had committed no crime; I was in the service of my country, in a just and necessary war, declared by the people of the United States through their representatives in Congress, and proclaimed to the world by our supreme executive officer, James Madison. On this subject I cannot help remarking the ignorance of the people of

England. In their newspapers, and in their conversation, you will constantly find this idea held up, that the war was the work of Mr. Madison and Bonaparte. This shows their ignorance of the affairs of our country. They are too ignorant to talk with on the constitution of our government, and on the character and conduct of our administration. It is no wonder that they are astonished at our victories by sea and by land when they are so totally ignorant of our country, of its endless resources, of its invincible republican spirit, of its strong government, founded on the affections of the people, and of the vigor and all commanding intellect that pervades and directs the whole.

On the 28th of this month, December, 1815, the news arrived here that a treaty of peace was signed the 24th instant at Ghent. After a momentary stupor, acclamations of joy burst forth from every mouth. It flew like wild fire through the prison; and "peace! peace! peace!" echoed throughout these dreary regions. To know that we were soon to return home, produced a sensation of joy beyond the powers of expression. Some screamed, holloaed, danced, sung, and capered, like so many Frenchmen. Others stood in amaze, with their hands in their pockets, as if doubtful of its truth. In by far the greater part, however, it gave a glow of health and animation to the wan cheek of the half sick, and hitherto cheerless prisoner. Some unforgiving spirits hail the joyful event as bringing them nearer the period of revenge, which they longed to exercise on some of their tyrannical keepers. Many who had meditated escape and had hoarded up every penny for that event, now brought it forth to spend in celebration of their regular deliverance. Even hard hearted Shortland appeared to bend from the haughty severity of his jailor-like manner, and can now speak to an American as if he were of the same species with himself. He has even allowed us to hoist our national colors on those prisons, and appears not to be offended at the sound of mirth and hilarity which now echoes throughout these extensive mansions. I say extensive, for I sup-

pose the whole of these prisons, yards, hospitals, stores and houses, are spread over twenty acres of ground. [See the plate.]

We calculate that the ratification of the treaty by the president of the United States, will arrive in England by the 1st of April, at which period there will not be an American left in this place. The very thoughts of it keep us from sleeping. Amidst this joy for peace, and for the near prospect of our seeing once more our dear America, there is not a man amongst us but feels disposed to try again the tug of war with the Britons, should she impress and flog our seamen, or instigate the savages of the wilderness to scalp and tomahawk the inhabitants of our frontiers. This war, and this harsh imprisonment, will add vigor to our arms should the people of America again declare, by their representatives in Congress, that individual oppression or the nation's wrongs render it expedient to sail or march against a foe whose tender mercies are cruelty. We can tell our countrymen, when we return home, what the Britons are, as their prisoners can tell the English what the Americans are. "By their fruits shall ye know them."

During this month a number of prisoners have been sent to this prison from Plymouth. They came here from Halifax; they were principally seamen taken out of prizes, which the English retook. They all make similar complaints of harsh usage, bad and very scanty food, and no attention to their health or comfort. There are now, at this dépôt, about Twenty-Three Hundred and Fifty Americans, who were impressed, previously to the war, into the British service by English ships and English press-gangs. They are the stoutest and most hardy looking men in the prison. This is easily accounted for. When the British go on board an American merchant ship to look for English sailors, they adopt one easy rule, viz—they select the stoutest, most hardy and healthy looking men, and swear that they are Englishmen. After they have selected one of these fine fellows, it is in vain that he produces his

protection, or any other evidence of his American birth and citizen ship.

We learn from these seamen that as soon as conveyed on board the British men of war they are examined as to the length of time they have been at sea, and according to the knowledge and experience they appear to have, they are stationed; and if they grumble at the duty assigned them they are called mutinous rascals, and threatened with the cat; the warrant officers are charged to watch them closely, lest they should attempt to pervert the crew and to prevent them from sending letters from the ship to their friends. Should any letters be detected on them, the sailors are charged, on pain of the severest punishment, to deliver them to some of the commissioned officers.

If they complained of their hard fate to their messmates, they were liable to punishment, and if they attempted to regain their liberty and were detected, they were stripped, tied up and most cruelly and disgracefully whipped like a negro slave. Can any thing be conceived more humiliating to the feelings of men born and brought up as we all are? Can we ever be cordial friends with such a people, even in time of peace? Will ever a man of our country, or his children after him, forgive this worse than Algerine treatment?

Several of the most intelligent of these impressed men related to me the particulars of the treatment they at various times received, and I had committed them to paper, but they are too mean, low and disgusting to be recorded. The pitiful evasions, unworthy arts, and even falsehoods of some captains of his Britannic majesty's line of battle ships, when a seaman produced his protection or offered to prove his nativity, or identify his person, as marked in his descriptive roll, were such, as to make me bless my stars that I did not belong to their service. There were however some instances of noble and generous conduct, which came up to the idea we once

entertained of English honor, before the solid bullion of the English naval character was beat into such thin, such very thin gold leaf, as to gild so many thousands of their epauletted seamen. The officers of the *Poictiers* were spoken of with respect; and by what I could learn, the smaller the vessel, the worse treatment was experienced by our prisoners and impressed seamen; your little big men being always the greatest tyrants. Among these small fry of the mistress of the ocean, *"you damned Yankee rascal,"* was a common epithet. Many of the impressed seamen now here have told me that they have been lashed to the gang-way and most severely whipped, even to the extent of three dozen, for refusing to do what the captain of a British man of war called, "THEIR DUTY!" Some of these men have replied, "it is my duty to serve my own country, and fight against its enemies;" and for saying so, have been farther abused. Have ever the French, Spaniards, Portuguese, Italians, Germans, Dutch, Danes, Swedes, Russians, Prussians, Turks, or *Algerines* treated American citizens in this way? And yet our Federalists can never bear to hear us speak, in terms of resentment, against "the bulwark of our religion." O, Caleb! Caleb! thou hast a head and so has a beetle.[1]

We had all more or less money from the American government, and some of the impressed men brought money with them. This attracted the avaricious spirit of our neighbors; so that our market was filled, not only with vegetables, but animal food. There was also seen in our market, piles of broad cloth, boxes of hats, boots, shoes and many other articles. The greatest pick-pockets of all were the Jews, with their watches, seals and trinkets, and bad books. A moral commander would have swept the prison clean of such vermin. The women who attend our market are as sharp as the Jews, and worse to deal with, for a sailor cannot beat them down

[1] When we have read in the American newspapers, which sometimes reached Dartmoor prison, the speeches and proclamations of the governor of Massachusetts, some of us have blushed at the degradation of our native state; that state which once took the lead in the opposition to Britain; and that Boston, once considered the cradle of liberty, has become among us, a name of reproach. Such are the effects of an unprincipled faction.

as he can one of these swindling Israelites. Milk is cheap, only 4d. per gallon, but they know how to water it.

The language and phraseology of these market people are very rude. When puffing off the qualities of their goods, when they talk very fast, we can hardly understand them. They do not speak near so good English as our common market people do in America. The best of them use the pronoun *he* in a singular manner—as can *he* pay me? Can *he* change, for can *you* pay me? Or *you* change? I am fully of opinion with those who say that the American people, taken collectively as a nation, speak the English language with more purity than the Britons, taken collectively. Every man or boy of every part of the United States would be promptly understood by the men of letters in London; but every man and boy of Old England would not be promptly understood by the lettered men in the capital towns of America. Is it not the Bible that has preserved the purity of our language in America?

I am sorry to remark that the Christmas holy-days have been recently marked with no small degree of intoxication, and its natural consequence, quarrelling among the prisoners. The news of peace and the expectation of being soon freed from all restraint have operated to unsettle the minds of the most unruly, and to encourage riot. Drinking, carousing and noise, with little foolish tricks, are now too common. Some one took off a shutter, or blind, from a window of No. 6, and as the persons were not delivered up by the standing committee, Captain Shortland punished the whole, college fashion, by stopping the market, or as this great man was pleased wittily to call it, *an embargo*. At length the men were given up to Shortland, who put them in the *black hole* for ten days.

To be a cook is the most disagreeable and dangerous office at this *dépôt*. They are always suspected, watched and hated, from an apprehension that they defraud the prisoner of his just allowance. One was flogged the other day for skimming the fat off the

soup. The grand Vizier's office at Constantinople is not more dangerous than a cook's at this prison, where are collected four or five thousand hungry American sons of liberty. The prisoners take it upon themselves to punish these pot-skimmers in their own way.

We have in this collection of prisoners, a gang of hard-fisted fellows, who call themselves "THE ROUGH ALLIES." They have assumed to themselves the office of accuser, judge and executioner. In my opinion they are as great villains as could be collected in the United States. They appear to have little principle, and as little humanity, and many of them are given up to every vice; and yet these ragamuffins have been allowed to hold the scale and rod of justice. These *rough allies* make summary work with the accused, and seldom fail to drag him to punishment. I am wearied out with such lawless conduct.

*January 30th.* The principal conversation among the most considerate is, when will the treaty be returned, ratified; for knowing the high character of our commissioners, none doubt but that the President and Senate will ratify what they have approved. We are all in an uneasy and unsettled state of mind; more so than before the news of peace. Before that news arrived, we had settled down in a degree of despair; but now we are preparing and planning our peaceable departure from this loathsome place.

I would ask the reader's attention to the conduct of Capt. Shortland, the commanding officer of this *dépôt* of prisoners, as well as to the conduct of the men under his charge, as the conduct and events of this period have led on to a tragedy that has filled our native land with mourning and indignation. I shall aim at truth and impartiality, and the reader may make such allowance as our situation may naturally afford, and his cool judgment suggest.

In the month of January, 1815, Captain Shortland commenced a practice of counting over the prisoners out of their respective

prisons, in the cold, raw air of the yard, where we were exposed above an hour, unnecessarily to the severity of the weather. After submitting to this caprice of our keeper for several mornings, in hopes he would be satisfied as to the accurate number of the men in prison, we all refused to go out again in wet and raw weather. Shortland pursued his usual method of stopping the market; but finding that it had no effect he determined on using force; and sent his soldiers into the yard, and ordered them to drive the prisoners into prison *in the middle of the afternoon,* whereas they heretofore remained out until the sun had set, and then they all went quietly into their dormitories. The regiment of regulars had been withdrawn, and a regiment of Somersetshire militia had taken their place, a set of stupid fellows, and generally speaking, ignorant officers. The regiment of regulars were clever fellows, and Shortland was awed by their character; but he felt no awe or respect for these irregulars.

The prisoners told the soldiers that this was an unusual time of day for them to leave the yard, and that they would not tamely submit to such caprice. The soldiers could only answer by repeating their orders. More soldiers were sent for, but they took special care to assume a position to secure their protection. The soldiers began now to use force with their bayonets. All this time Shortland stood on the military walk with the major of the regiment, observing the progress of his orders. Our men stood their ground. On observing this opposition, Shortland became enraged, and ordered the major to give the word for the soldiers to fire. The soldiers were drawn up in a half circle, to keep them from scattering.

We were now hemmed in between No. 7 and the wall that divided this from the yard of No. 4. The major then gave orders to the officer in the yard, to charge bayonet. This did not occasion our prisoners to retreat; they rather advanced; and some of them told the soldiers that if they pricked a single man, they would

disarm them. Shortland was watching all these movements from behind the gate; and finding that he had not men enough to drive them in, drew his soldiers out of the yard. After this the prisoners went into the prison of their own accord, when the turnkey sounded a horn.

These militia-men have been somewhat intimidated by the threatenings of the "rough allies," before mentioned. These national guards thought they could drive us about like so many Frenchmen; but they have found their mistake. A man escaped from the black-hole, who had been condemned to remain in it during the war, for attempting to blow up a ship. The prisoners were determined to protect him; and when Shortland found that the prisoners would not betray him into his hands he resorted to his usual embargo of the market, and sent his soldiers in after the prisoner; but he might as well have sought a needle in a hay-mow; for such was the difficulty of finding an individual among *six thousand.* They ransacked every berth and lurking place, and passed frequently by the man without being able to identify him. The prisoners mixed in so entirely with the soldiers, that the latter could not act, and were actually fearful of being disarmed. When these Somersetshire militia found that we were far from being afraid of them, they ceased to be insolent and treated us with something like respect. There was a considerable degree of friendship between us and the late regiment of regulars, who were gentlemen, compared with these militia.

There are about four hundred and fifty negroes in prison No. 4, and this assemblage of blacks affords many curious anecdotes, and much matter for speculation. These blacks have a ruler among them whom they call *King Dick.* He is by far the largest, and I suspect the strongest man in the prison. He is six feet five inches in height and proportionably large. This black Hercules commands respect, and his subjects tremble in his presence. He goes the rounds every day, and visits every berth to see if they are all

kept clean. When he goes the rounds he puts on a large bear-skin cap, and carries in his hand a huge club. If any of his men are dirty, drunken, or grossly negligent, he threatens them with a beating, and if they are saucy they are sure to receive one. They have several times conspired against him, and attempted to dethrone him; but he has always conquered the rebels. One night several attacked him while asleep in his hammock; he sprang up and seized the smallest of them by his feet, and thumped another with him. The poor negro who had thus been made a beetle of was carried next day to the hospital sadly bruised and provokingly laughed at. This ruler of the blacks, this *King Richard the IVth,* is a man of good understanding, and he exercises it to a good purpose. If any one of his color cheats, defrauds or steals from his comrade, he is sure to be punished for it. Negroes are generally reputed to be thieves. Their faculties are commonly found to be inadequate to the comprehension of the moral system; and as to the Christian system, their notions of it, generally speaking, are a burlesque to every thing serious. The punishment which these blacks are disposed to inflict on one another for stealing partakes of barbarity, and ought never to be allowed, where the whites have the control of them.

Besides his majesty *King Dick,* these black prisoners have among them a priest, who preaches every Sunday. He can read, and he gives good advice to his brethren; and his prayers are very much in the strain of what we have been used to hear at home. In the course of his education he has learnt, it is said, to know the nature of crimes and punishments; for it is said that while on board the *Crown Prince* prison-ship at Chatham, he received a dozen lashes for stealing some clothing; but we must make allowance for stories; for preachers have always complained of the calumnies of their enemies. If his whole history was known and correctly narrated, he might be found a duly qualified preacher to such a congregation as that of prison No. 4.

This black man has a good deal of art and cunning, and has drawn several whites into his church; and his performances have an imposing cast, and are often listened to with seriousness. He appears to have learnt his sermons and prayers from a diligent reading of good books; but, as to the Christian system, the man has no more idea of it than he has of the New Jerusalem; but then his good sentences, delivered, frequently, with great warmth, and his string of good advice, given in the negro dialect, makes altogether a novelty that attracts many to hear him; and he certainly is of service to the blacks; and it is a fact that the officers have heard him hold forth without any expressions of ridicule, while the majority of these miserable people are too much depraved to pay any serious attention to his advice.

It is curious to observe the natural alliance between *King Dick* and this priest. Dick honors and protects him, while the priest inculcates respect and obedience to this *Richard the IVth.* Here we see the union of church and State in miniature. Who told this negro that to maintain this influence he must rally round the huge club of the strongest and most powerful man in this black gang of sinners? And who told King Dick that his nervous arm and massy club were insufficient without the aid of the preacher of terror? Neither of them had read or heard of Machiavel. Who taught this black orator that the priesthood must seek shelter behind the throne from the hostilities of reason? And who told "the rough allies," the Janizaries of this *imperium in imperio,* that they must assist and countenance both Dick and the priest? The science of government is not so deep and complicated a thing as king-craft and priest-craft would make us believe, since these rude people, almost deserving the name of a banditti, threw themselves into a sort of government that is to be discerned in the early stages of every government. The love of power, of influence, and of distinction is clearly discernible, even among the prisoners at Dartmoor.

Besides King Dick, and Simon the priest, there was another black divine, named *John.* He had been a servant of Edward, duke of Kent, third son of the present king of England; on which account black John assumed no small state and dignity. He left the service of his royal highness and was found on board an American ship, and was pressed from thence into a British man of war, where he served a year or two in the station of captain's steward; but disliking the service, he claimed his release as an American, and was sent with a number of other pressed men to the prison-ships at Chatham, and came to this prison with a number of other Africans. After King Dick, and Simon the priest black John was the next man of the most consequence among the negroes; and considering his family connection, and that he knew how to read and write, it is not much to be wondered at. John conceived that his influence with his royal highness was sufficient to encourage him to write to the duke to get him set at liberty, who actually applied to the transport board wih that view; but they could not grant it. He received, however, a letter from Capt. Hervey, the duke's secretary, on the subject, who added that as he had been so unwise as to refuse to serve his majesty he must suffer for his folly. We have been particular in this anecdote, and we request our readers to bear it in mind, when we shall come to contrast this prompt answer of the royal duke to the letter of a negro, with the conduct of Mr. B. our agent for prisoners. The prisoners themselves noticed it, and envied the negro, while they execrated the haughty, unfeeling agent, who seldom, or never answered their letters, or took any notice of their applications.

The poor negro consoled himself for his disappointment by turning Christian; and being a pretty clever fellow, and having formerly belonged to the royal family, it was considered an act of kindness and magnanimity to raise him to the rank of deacon in Simon's church. Deacon John generally acts as a privy counsellor to the king, and is sometimes a judge in criminal cases, when

his majesty allows of one, which is not very often; for he most commonly acts in as despotic and summary a manner as the Dey of Algiers himself.

King Dick keeps a boxing-school, where the white men are sometimes admitted. No. 4 is noted also for fencing, dancing and music; and, however extraordinary it may appear, they teach these accomplishments to the white men. A person entering the cock-loft of No. 4 would be highly amused with the droll scenery which it exhibited, and if his sense of smelling be not too refined, may relish, for a little while, this strange assemblage of antics. Here he may see boxing, fencing, dancing, raffling and other modes of gambling; and to this we may add, drawing with chalk and charcoal, and tricks of sleight of hand, and all this to gratify the eye; and for the sense of hearing, he may be regaled with the sound of clarionets, flutes, violins, flageolets, fifes, tamborines, together with the whooping and singing of the negroes. On Sundays this den of thieves is transformed into a temple of worship, when Simon the priest mounted on a little stool, behind a table covered with green cloth proclaims the wonders of creation, and salvation to the souls of true believers; and hell fire and brimstone, and weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, to the hardened and impenitent sinner and obstinate rebel of proffered mercy. As he approaches the end of his discourse, he grows warmer and warmer, and, foaming at the mouth, denounces all the terrors of the law against every heaven-daring, God-provoking sinner. I have frequently noticed the effect of this black man's oratory upon some of his audience. While he has been thus thundering and lightning, sullen moans and hollow groans issue from different parts of the room, a proof that his zealous harangue solemnizes some of his hearers, while the greater part of them are making grimaces, or betraying marks of impatience; but no one dare be riotous, as near the preacher sat his majesty King Dick, with his terrible club, and huge bear-skin cap. The members of the church sat in an half circle nearest the priest, while those

who had never passed over the threshold of grace stood behind them,

A little dispute, if not quite a schism, has existed between Simon the priest and deacon John. The latter, while in the family of a royal duke, had learned that it was proper to read prayers already made, and printed to their hands; but Simon said he should make but few converts if he *read* his prayers. He said that prayers ought to spring at once, warm from the heart; and that *reading* prayers was too cold a piece of work for him or his church. But John said in reply, that reading prayers was practiced by his royal highness the duke of Kent, and all the noble families in England, as well as on board all his Britannic majesty's ships of war. But Simon, who had never waited on royalty nor ever witnessed the religious exercises of an English man of war, would not believe this practice of the British nation ought to have weight with the reformed Christians of the United States. There was a diversity of opinion in the black church, and the dispute once grew so warm, that Simon told John, that it was his opinion, that he who could not pray to his God, without a book would be damned.

His majesty King Dick finding that this dispute might endanger the peace of the church, and possibly diminish his own influence, advised that the dispute should be left to the decision of a neighboring Methodist preacher, who sometimes visited the prison in a labor of love. The preacher came and heard patiently the arguments of both sides, and finally decided, as King Dick doubtless foresaw, in favor of Simon. He said that the reason why his royal highness the duke of Kent, and all the royal family, and all the nobility and parliament-men read their prayers, was because they had not time to make them, each one for himself. Now Deacon John was a better reasoner than Simon, but Simon had the most cant; and he, of course prevailed. It is probable that John had concluded that if he could carry a vote for *reading* prayers, he himself, would be the reader, and then he should become as conspicuous as Simon. Emulation and the desire of distinction,

the great and indeed main-spring of this world, was as apparent among these degraded sons of Africa, as among any white gentlemen and ladies in the land. John's ambition, and his envy, operated just like the ambition and envy of white people. At length, when the deacon found that since the decision of the Methodist, his supporters deserted him, he made his mind up to follow the current, and to justify his conduct by inculcating a spirit of a conciliation and union. This shrewd fellow knew that if he did not follow the current, he should lose the privilege of sitting at the end of the table, opposite to Simon, and of leaning his head on the great Bible while Simon was preaching; privileges too great to be slighted in such a church and directly after a religious dispute.

Since I returned home, and while transcribing this journal for the press, I have thought that the conduct of deacon John was from the self same principle with that which actuated the Federalists, since the dissolution and disgrace of the Hartford Convention. This faction found themselves after the peace, and after the battle of New Orleans, going fast down the stream of popular opinion; and then it was that they preached up conciliation, liberality, and union; then it was they caught hold of the skirts of the land and naval heroes; nay, they went so far as to hail Jefferson and Madison as brother *Unitarians!* In short, the situation of black John and the Federalists of Massachusetts was exactly the same, and their conduct in every point similar; and the leading Federalists of Boston have been left, like the deacon of the negro congregation, in No. 4, Dartmoor prison, to sleep upon the great Bible.

Simon the priest enjoyed one great and envied privilege, which John never pretended to, namely, an acquaintance and intercourse with the angel *Gabriel.* He had many revelations from this celestial messenger, and related them to his church. They related principally to the fate of his fellow prisoners; one, in particular, he told to his church with awe and solemnity.

"I saw," said he, "a great light, shining only through the grates of

one window, before the hour of day-break. I looked up, and saw something like a man with wings. I was at first frightened, and cried out, *'who comes dare';* for I could not see his face. Directly the bars of the window bent each way, and his head and shoulders came in, when I knew him to be the angel Gabriel. 'Simon,' said he, 'I am come to tell you that this prison will be sunk before forty days, because its inhabitants are so wicked.' *Den I tank him,* and he drew back his head again, and the iron bars were restored to their place again, when he spread out his wings, which were covered with ten thousand stars, which made a great light when he flew away." Such was the method used by this artful black man to rouse his countrymen out of the sink of vice; and it had the desired effect. This prediction solemnised several of the negroes, and had more or less effect upon all of them. They became more liberal in their contributions, which enabled Simon to purchase a new green coat. It seemed as if the most profligate of these fellows had a secret dread of Simon's prediction, and were willing to gain his favor by contributions instead of repentance. Has not this disposition founded churches, monasteries and nunneries? Many of Simon's church are strongly impressed with the apprehension of the prison sinking within forty days.

These blacks have been desirous of having their prison the centre of amusement. They act plays twice a week, and as far as close imitation of what they have seen and heard, and broad grimace, they are admirable, but they are half the time ignorant of the meaning of the words they utter. The gate ways and centry boxes are plaistered over with play-bills, announcing—OTHELLO, for the first time, by Mr. *Robinson*—DESDEMONA, by Mr. *Jones.* I seldom failed to attend these exhibitions, and must confess that I never before or since, or perhaps ever shall laugh so heartily as at these troglodyte dramas. Their acting was assuredly the most diverting beyond all comparison or example I ever saw. They would cut so many negroish capers in tragedy, grin and distort their countenances

in such a variety of inhuman expressions, while they kept their bodies either stiff as so many stakes or in a monkeyish wriggle, and ever and anon such a baboon stare at Desdemona, whose face, neck and hands were covered with chalk and red paint to make *him* look like a beautiful white lady—was altogether, considering that they themselves were very serious, the most ludicrous exhibition of two legged ridiculousness I ever witnessed. In the midst of my loud applauses, I could not, when my sore sides would allow me to articulate, help exclaiming—O! Shakespeare! Shakespeare!—O Garrick! Garrick!—what would I not give (a despised American prisoner) could I raise you from the dead, that you might see the black consequences of your own transcendent geniuses!—When Garrick rubbed himself over with burnt cork to make himself look like a Moor, or with lamp-black to resemble Mungo, it did pretty well; but for a negro man to cover his forehead, neck and hands with chalk, and his cheeks with vermillion, to make him look like an English or American beauty, was too much. Had I been going up the ladder to be hanged, I should have laughed at this sight; for to all this outrageous grimace, was added a fantastic habiliment, and an odour from Desdemona and company, that associated the ideas of the skunk and the polecat. I presume that their august majesties, the emperor and empress of Hayti, have some means of destroying this association of ideas, so revolting to Americans.

After all, this may be in us a disgust grounded more in prejudice than nature. What we call delicacy is a refinement of civilization, and of course a departure from nature. See how the brutes enjoy rolling and wallowing in what *we call* dirt; next to them, we may observe the love of what *we* call filth in savages, and of those persons in our cities who stand nearest, to them. Extreme cleanliness is the offspring of riches, leisure, luxury and extreme refinement; nevertheless it is true what Swift says, that "persons with nice minds have nasty ideas." I suffered greatly, and so did many of our countrymen, on our first acquaintance with filth and vermin in

this our British captivity. Many a time have I got up from my dinner as hungry as I set down, when disgust has been greater than appetite. I have surmounted antipathies I once thought insurmountable. I am not the only one who has often retired from our disgusting repast, to my bunk or sleeping berth, in silent agony, there to breathe out to my Maker, woes too great for utterance. O, Britain! Britain! will there not be a day of retribution for these thy cruelties!

There are some in this dismal prison, who have been used all their lives, not to conveniencies only, but to delicacies; who are obliged to submit to the disagreeables of this uncivilized mode of incarcerating brave men, for one of the first of Grecian, Roman, English and American virtues, the love of country, or patriotism. These unfortunate men, with minds far elevated beyond the officers who are placed here to guard and torment them, submit to their confinement with a better grace than one could have expected. When these men have eaten their stinted ration, vilely cooked, and hastily served up, they return to their hammocks, or sleeping berths, and there try *"to steep their senses in forgetfulness,"* until the recurrence of the next disgusting meal. On the other hand some have said that they never before eat with such a keen appetite, and their only complaint has been that there was not one quarter enough for them to devour. Some have since said that they devoured their daily allowance at Dartmoor, with more relish than they ever have since, when set down at tables covered as our American tables are, with venison, poultry, the finest fish and the best fruits of our country, with choice old cider, and good foreign wines.

A thing very disagreeable to me arose from causes not occasioned by the enemy. I have been squeezed to soreness by a crowd of rough, overbearing men, who ofttimes appeared to be indifferent whether they trampled you under feet or not. The *"rough allies,"* so called, had no feeling for men smaller and weaker than themselves. From this gang you could seldom get a civil answer.

Their yells and whooping, more like savages than white men, were very troublesome. The conduct of these proved that it was natural for the strong to tyrannize over the weak. I have often thought that our assemblage of prisoners resembled very much the Grecian and Roman democracies, which were far, very far, beneath the just, rational, and wisely guarded democracy of our dear America, for whose existence and honor we are all still heartily disposed to risk our lives and spill our blood.

As not allowing us prisoners a due and comfortable portion of clean food is the heavy charge I have to make against the British nation, I shall here, once for all, attempt to describe the agonies I myself felt and observed others to endure, from cravings of hunger —which are keen descriptions in young men, not yet arrived to their full growth.—The hungry prisoner is seen to traverse the alleys, backwards and forwards, with a gnawing stomach and a haggard look; while he sees the fine white loaves on the tables of the bread-seller, when all that he possesses cannot buy a single loaf. I have known many men tremble and become sick at their stomachs, at the sight of bread they could not obtain. Sometimes a prisoner has put away a portion of his bread, and sworn to himself that he would not eat it until such an hour after breakfast; he has, however, gone to it, and picked a few crumbs from it, and replaced it; and sometimes he could no longer resist the grinding torments of hunger, but devoured with more than canine appetite; for it must be understood that the interval between the evening and morning meal was the most distressing. An healthy, growing young man feels very uncomfortable if he fasts five hours; but to be without food, as we often were, for fourteen hours, was a cruel neglect or a barbarous custom. Our resource from hunger was sleep; not but that the sensations of hunger and the thoughts of the deprivation, often prevented me from getting asleep; and at other times, when wrapt in sleep, I have dreamed of setting down to a table of the most delicious food, and most savoury meats, and in the greatest profusion;

and amidst my imagined enjoyment have waked in disappointment, agony and tears. This was the keenest misery I ever endured, and at such times have I cursed the nation that allowed of it, as being more barbarous than Algerines or wild Indians. The comparative size of the pieces of beef and bread is watched with a keen and jealous eye; so are even the bits of turnip in our soup, lest one should have more than the other. I have noticed more acts of meanness and dishonesty in men of respectable character, in the division and acquisition of the articles of our daily food, than in any other transaction whatever: such as they would despise, were hunger out of the question. The best apology I can make for the practice of gaming is the hope of alleviating this most abominable system of starvation. Had we been duly and properly fed we never should have run so deeply into the hell of gambling. We did not want money to buy clothing, or wine, or rum, but to buy beef, and bread and milk. I repeat it, all the irregularities, and finally, the horrors and death, that occurred in a remarkable manner, in this den of despair, arose from the British system of scanty food for young men, whose vigorous systems and habits of being full fed, demanded a third more solid flesh meat, than would satisfy a potatoe-eating Irishman, an oat-feeding Scotchman, or an half starved English manufacturer. After we have finished our own dinners in New England, we give to our cats and dogs and other domestic animals, more solid nourishment, the remnant of our meals, than what we had often allowed us in the ships and prisons of *"the world's last hope,"* Pickering's *"fast anchor'd isle."*

Among the abuses of Dartmoor prison was that of allowing Jews to come among us to buy clothes, and the allowing some other people, worse than Jews, to cheat us in the articles we purchased. How far our keepers "went snacks" with these harpies, we never could know. We only suspected that they did not enjoy all their swindling privileges gratuitously. Before the immoral practice of gambling was introduced and countenanced, it was no unusual

thing to see men in almost every berth, reading or writing or studying navigation. I have noticed the progress of vice in some with pain and surprise. I have seen men, once respectable, give examples of vice that I cannot describe, or even name; and I am fearful that some of our young boys may carry home to their hitherto pure and chaste country vices they never had any idea of when they left it. I believe Frenchmen, Italians and Portuguese are much worse examples for our youth than English, Irish, or Scotchmen. I must say of the British that they are generally men of far better habits and morals than some of the Continental nations. But enough, and more than enough on the depravity of the oldest of the European nations.

*February 28, 1815.*—Time hangs heavily on the weary and restless prisoner. His hopes of liberation, and his anxiety, increase daily and hourly. *The Favorite! The Favorite,* is in every one's mouth; and every one fixes the day of her arrival. We have just heard that she was spoken near the coast of America, by the *Sultan,* a British 74, on the 2d day of February. If so, then she must arrive in a few days, with the news of the ratification or rejection of the treaty of peace, by Mr. Madison; and on this great event our happiness depends. Some of the English merchants are so confident that our President will ratify the treaty, that they are sending vast quantities of English manufactures out to Halifax, to be ready to thrust into the ports of America, as soon as we shall be able legally to admit them. It is easy to perceive that the English are much more anxious to send us their productions, than we are to receive them.

Our anxiety increases every day. We inquire of every one the news. We wait with impatience for the newspapers, and when we receive them are disappointed; not finding in them what we wish. They, to be sure, speak of the sitting of the *Vienna Congress;* and we have been expecting every day that this political old hen had hatched out her various sort of eggs. We expected that her mot-

ley brood would afford us some fun. Here we expected to see a young hawk, and there a gosling and next a strutting turkey, and then a dodo, a loon, an ostrich, a wren, a magpie, a cuckoo, and a wag-tail. But the old Continental hen has now set so long, that we conclude that her eggs are addled and incubation frustrated. During all this time, the Gallic cock is on his roost at Elba, with his head under his wing.

We but now and then get a sight of Cobbett's *Political Register;* and when we do, we devour it, and destroy it, before it comes to the knowledge of our Cerberus. This writer has a manner *sui generis,* purely his own; but it is somewhat surprising how he becomes so well informed of the actual state of things, and of the feelings and opinions of both parties in our country. His acuteness, his wit, his logic and his surliness, form, altogether, a curious portraiture of an English politician. We now and then get sight of American papers, but they are almost all of them Federal papers, and contain matter more hostile to our government than the English papers. The most detestable paper printed in London is called *The Times,* and that is often thrown in our way; but even this paper is not to be compared to the *Federal Republican,* printed at Washington or Georgetown, or to the Boston Federal papers. When such papers are shown to us by the English here we are fairly brought up, and know not what to say.

I cannot answer precisely for the impressions Governor Strong's speeches and proclamations have made on others, I can only answer for myself. They very much surprised and grieved me. I was born in the same county where Mr. Strong resided, and where I believe he has always lived and I had always entertained a respect for his serious character, and have, from my boyhood, considered him among the very sensible men, and even saints of our country; and all my connections and relations gave their votes for good *Caleb Strong,* on whose judgment and public conduct, my parents taught me to rely, with as much confidence as if he had actually

been a thirteenth apostle. Just then what must have been my surprise, on reading his proclamations for fasts and thanksgivings, and his speeches and messages to the legislature and his conduct relative to the general government and the militia; and above all for his strange conduct in organizing a convention of malcontents at Hartford, in Connecticut. No event in New England staggered me so much. When we learnt that he proclaimed England to be "*the bulwark of the holy religion we profess,*" I concluded that it was a party calumny, until I saw its confirmation in the attempts of his friends to vindicate the assertion. I then concluded that one of two things must have existed; either Mr. Strong had become superannuated and childish, or that the English Faction had got behind his chair of government and under the table of the counsel-board, and in the hollow panels of his audience chamber, and completely bewitched our political *Barzilla.* I suspected that gang of Jesuits, the *Essex Junto,* had put out his eyes, and was leading him into danger and disgrace. It is undeniable that Governor Strong has, in his public addresses, sided more with the declared enemy, Britain, than with his own national government; and that he has said a great deal tending to encourage the enemy to persist in their demands, and to pursue the war, than he has to discourage them. It appears, in truth, that the English consider him in a great measure their friend and well wisher.

Is it possible that Governor Strong can be deluded away by the missionary and Bible societies of Old England, so as to mistake the English for a religious people? I am very confident that there is *less* religion, or appearance of it, in London and in all their large cities, than in any other civilized country of the same numbers, in Europe. Their national churches are empty, while their streets and their harbors are full of lewdness; and they have more thieves, gamblers, forgers, cheats and bawds than any other nation upon earth. Add to this, their laws are bloody, beyond modern example, their military punishments horrible, and their treatment of prisoners of

war a disgrace to the name of Christians. Can Governor Strong be totally ignorant of the policy of some in patronizing Bible and missionary societies? And does he not see the impracticability of the scheme contemplated by the latter? If we divide the known countries of the globe into thirty equal parts, *five* will be found to be *Christians, six Mahometans,* and NINETEEN *Pagans.* It is difficult to believe that the first man, the governor and commander in chief of the great and respectable commonwealth of Massachusetts, can seriously expect that the missionary societies of England and of Boston can effect this immense task or that it ever was the design of Providence that all the families of the earth should think alike on subjects of religion. Let us take things as the sons of men have always found them, and not presume to oppugn Providence, who has decreed that there shall be, every where, men of different colours, countenances, voices, manner of speaking, of different feelings and views of things, and also of different languages and of different opinions, as it regards the Deity, and his government of the world; and that among this great and doubtless necessary diversity of the views of him, we may have the most pure and rational system of any. Let us then enjoy that system, encourage a virtuous education and love one another, and leave to his direction and controul the myriads of rational beings on earth, of which we, Christians, make so small a part. No, no, my countrymen, if Governor Strong will not attend exclusively to the mere affairs of the state, with its relative duties, and leave the great world to the legislation of its great Creator, you had better allow him to retire to Northampton, there to study in silence how to govern his own heart, and how to work out his own salvation, instead of continuing the tool of a turbulent and vicious party. I still think Mr. Strong is a man of good intentions, and an honest patriot; but that he has been deluded by artful men, who in their scheme of governing the whole nation have found their account in placing at the head of their party in Massachusetts, a man of correct morals and manners, and of a reputed religious cast of mind. But Mr. Strong

should reflect, and being a phlegmatic man, he is able to reflect calmly, and consider things deliberately. He should reflect, I say, on the impression his remarkable conduct must have on the minds of his countrymen, who risked their lives, and are now suffering a severe bondage in that great national cause of *"free trade and no impressment,"* which led the American people to declare war against Britain, by the voice of their representatives in Congress assembled. How strange and how painful must it appear to us, and to our friends in Europe, that the governor of a great state should lean more towards the Prince Regent of Britain than to the President of the United States. If therefore we consider Mr. Strong as a sensible and a correct man and a true patriot, his conduct as governor of Massachusetts, especially as to the *time* of organizing a convention, of which the English promised themselves countenance and aid, must have appeared more than strange to us in captivity.

If we contemplate the character of the leading men of that party which put into office, and still supports Governor Strong, and with whom he has co-operated, we cannot clear this gentleman of reproach. Previously to our late contest with Britain, it was the unceasing endeavor of the leaders of the Federal party to bring into discredit and contempt the worthiest and best men of the nation; to ridicule and degrade every thing American, or that reflected honor on the American Independence. So bitter was their animosity, so insatiate their thirst for power and high places, that they did not hesitate to advocate measures for the accomplishment of their grand object, which was to get into the places of those now in power. How often have we seen the party declaring in their venal prints that the American administration was base, and cowardly, and tamely suffering the outrages, abuses and contempt of the nations of Europe, without possessing the spirit to resent, or the power to resist them; and that *"we could not be kicked into a war."* Yet after the administration had exhausted every effort to bring England to do justice, and war was declared, these very Federalists

called the act wicked and inhuman, and denounced the President for plunging the country into hostilities with the mistress of the ocean, the most powerful nation of the earth. They called this act of Congress *"Madison's War,"* and did every thing in their power to render that upright man odious in the eyes of the unthinking part of the community. This was not all; these arrogant men assumed to themselves all the talents and all the virtues of the country, used every means in their power to paralyze the arm of government, and reduce the energies of the nation, in the face and front of our adversary. By arguments and threats they induced the monied men in Massachusetts very generally to refuse loans of money to government, and to ruin our resources. Did not this party, denominated *Federalists,* exult at the disasters of our arms, and did they not vote in the Senate of Massachusetts, that it was unworthy a religious and moral people, to rejoice at the immortal achievements of our gallant seamen? In the midst of our difficulties, when this powerful enemy threatened us by sea and land. with a powerful force from Penobscot, another through Lake Champlain, another landed at the Chesapeake, while nothing but resistance and insurgency was talked of and hinted at within, in this state of things, and with these circumstances, did not Governor Strong, and the Federal party generally, seize hold of this alarming state of our affairs, to call the *Convention at Hartford,* and that not merely to perplex the government, but to be the organ of communication between the enemy and the malcontents? Did they not then talk loudly of our worm-eaten Constitution, and did they not call the Union *"a rope of sand"* that could no longer hold together? If there be a line of transgression beyond the bounds of forgiveness, the leaders of that party who put Mr. Strong up for Governor, have attained it. These things I gather from the papers, and from the history of the day, as I have collected them since my return home. And to all this must be added the damning fact of Te Deums, orations, toasts, and processions of the clergy, judges, with all the leaders of the Federal, or opposition party, on the suc-

cess of the Spaniards in restoring the *Inquisition,* and recalling the reign of superstition and terror, against which we have been preaching and praying ever since the first settlement of our country.

Our American newspapers, if they are not so correctly written as the London papers, are informing and amusing. They show the enterprize, the activity, and the daring thoughts of a free and an intrepid people; while the London papers are filled with a catalogue of nobles and noblesses, who were assembled to bow, to flatter, to cringe, and to prink at the levee of the Great Prince Regent, the presumptive George the IVth, with now and then some account of his wandering wife, the Princess of Wales. We are there also entertained with a daily account of the health and gestation of *Joanna Southcote,* for whose reputation and welfare thinking Johnny Bull is vastly anxious, insomuch that were any Continental nation to run obstinately counter to the popular opinion respecting her, we do deem it not impossible that the majority of the nation might be led to sign addresses to the Prince to go to war with them, in honor of Saint Joanna! Their papers likewise contain a particular account of the examination of rogues by the Bow-street officers, highway robberies, and executions; together with quack puffs and miraculous cures. These, together with the most glorious and unparalleled bravery of their officers and seamen, and of their generals and soldiers, with the highest encomiums on the religion, the learning, the generosity, contentment and happiness of the people of Britain and Ireland, make up the sum and substance of all the London papers, *William Cobbett's* alone excepted; and he speaks with a bridle in his mouth!

This month (February) Captain Shortland stopped the market for six days, in consequence of some unruly fellows taking away certain wooden stanchions from Prison No. 6. But the old market-women, conceiving that the Captain encroached upon their copyhold, would not quietly submit to it. They told him that as the men were going away soon it was cruel to curtail their traffic. We

always believed that these market-women, and the shop and stall keepers and Jews, purchased in some way or other the unequal traffic between them and us. Be that as it may Shortland could not resist the commercial interest, so that he, like good Mr. Jefferson, listened to the clamor of the merchants and raised the embargo.

No sooner was quiet restored and the old women and Jews pacified, but a serious discontent arose among the prisoners, on discovering that these Jews, of all complexions, had raised the price of their articles, on the idea, we supposed, that we should not much longer remain the subjects of their impositions. The *rough allies,* a sort of regulators, who were too stout, and most commonly too insolent, to be governed by our regular and moderate committees, turned out in a great rage, and tore down several of the small shops, or stalls, where slops were exposed for sale. These fellows at length organized themselves into a company of plunderers. I have seen men run from their sleeping berths, in which they spent nearly their whole time, and plunder these little shop-keepers, and carry the articles they plundered, and secrete them in their beds. These mobs or gangs of robbers were a scandal to the American character, and strongly reprobated by every man of honor in the prisons. Some of these little merchants found themselves stripped of all they possessed in a few minutes, on the charge of exorbitant prices. We never rested, nor allowed theses culprits to rest, until we saw the cat laid well on their backs. These plunderings were in consequence of informers, and there was no name, not even that of *a Federalist,* was so odious with all the prisoners, as that of an *informer.* We never failed to punish an informer. Nothing but the advanced age of a man (who was sixty years old), prevented him from being whipped for informing Capt. Shortland of what the old man considered an injury, and for which he put the man accused into the black hole. An informer, a traitor, and an avowed Federalist, were objects of detestation at Dartmoor.

During the time that passed between the news of peace, and

that of its ratification, an uneasy and mob-like disposition more than once betrayed itself. Three impressed American seamen had been sent in here from a British ship of war, since the peace. They were on board the *Pelican,* in the action with the American ship *Argus,* when fell our brave Captain Allen. One day, when all three were a little intoxicated, they boasted of the feats they performed in fighting against their own countrymen; and even boasted of the prize money they had shared for capturing the *Argus.* This our prisoners could not endure; and it soon reached the ears of the *rough allies,* who seized them and kicked and cuffed them about unmercifully; and they took one of them, who had talked more imprudently than the rest, and led him to the lamp iron that projected from one of the prisons, and would in all probability, have hanged him thereon, had not Shortland rescued him by an armed force. They had fixed a paper on the fellow's breast, on which was written in large letters, *A Traitor* and a *Federalist.*

It may seem strange to some, but I am confident that there is no class of people among us more strongly attached to the American soil, than our seamen, who are floating about in the world and seldom tread on the ground. The sailor who roams about the world marks the difference of treatment and exults in the superior advantages of his countrymen. The American custom of allowing on board merchant ships the common sailors to traffic a little in adventures enlarges their views, makes them think and enquire, and excites an interest in the sales of the whole cargo. The common sailor here feels a sort of unity of interest; and he is habituated to feel as a member of the floating store-house which he is navigating. It is doubtful whether the British sailor feels any thing of this.

I have had often to remark on the tyrannical conduct and unfeeling behaviour of Captain Shortland, but he had for it the excuse of an enemy; but the neglect of Mr. Beasley, with his supercilious behaviour towards his countrymen here confined, admits of no excuse. He was bound to assist us and befriend us, and to

listen to our reasonable complaints. When negro John wrote to his royal Highness the Duke of Kent, son of King George the 3d, and brother of the Prince Regent, he received an answer in terms of kindness and reason; but Mr. Beasley, who was paid by our government for being our agent, and official friend, never condescended to answer our letters, and if they ever were noticed, it was in the style of reproof—His conduct is here condemned by *six thousand* of his countrymen, and as many curses are daily uttered on him in this prison. It is almost treason in this dismal Commonwealth or rather common misery, to speak in his favour. If Shortland and Beasley were both drowning, and one only could be taken out by the prisoners of Dartmoor, I believe in my soul that *that* one would be Shortland; for as I said before, he has the excuse of an enemy.

The prisoners have been long determined to testify their feelings towards Mr. Beasley, before they left Dartmoor, and the time for it has arrived. The most ingenious of our countrymen are now making a figure resemblance, or effigy of this distinguished personage. One has contributed a coat, another pantaloons, another a shirt bosom or frill, another a stuffed-out cravat, and so they have made up a pretty genteel, haughty looking gentleman-agent with heart and brains full equal, they think, to the person whom they wish to represent. They called this figure Mr. B—. They then brought him to trial. He was indicted for many crimes towards them and towards the character of the United States. The jury declared him guilty of each and every charge, and he was sentenced by an unanimous decree of his judges, to be hanged by the neck until he was dead, and after that to be burnt. They proceeded with him to the place of execution, which was from the roof of prison No. 7, where a pole was rigged out, to which was attached a halter. After silence was proclaimed, the halter was fastened round the neck of the effigy, and then a solemn pause ensued, which apparent solemnity was befitting the character of men who were

convinced of the necessity of the punishment of the guilty, while they felt for the sufferings and shame of a fellow-mortal. After hanging the proper time, the hangman, who was a negro, cut him down; and then the *rough allies* took possession of him, and conducted him to a convenient spot in the yard, where they burnt him to ashes.—This was not, like the plunder of the shop-keepers, the conduct of an infuriate mob; but it was begun and carried through by some of the steadiest men within the walls of Dartmoor prison. They said they had no other way of testifying their contempt of a man who they supposed had injured them all, and disgraced their country. Such was the fact; as to the justness of their charges I have nothing to say. I hope Mr. B. can vindicate his conduct to the world, and I hope this publication may lead to a thing so much wished for.

During all this solemn farce, poor Shortland looked like a culprit under sentence of death. Some of the rogues had written, with chalk on the walls, BE YOU ALSO READY! This commander's situation could not be an enviable one. He was probably as courageous a man as the ordinary run of British officers; but it was plainly discoverable that he was half his time in dread, and during the scene just described, in terror, which was perceivable amidst his affected smiles, and assumed gaiety. He told a gentleman, belonging to this *dépôt,* that he never saw nor ever read or heard of such a set of *Devil-daring, God-provoking fellows, as these same Yankees.* And he added *I had rather have the charge of five thousand Frenchmen, than* FIVE HUNDRED *of these sons of liberty; and yet,* said he, *I love the dogs better than I do the damn'd frog-eaters.*

On the 30th of March we received the heart-cheering news of the total defeat of the British army before NEW-ORLEANS, with the death of its commander in chief, Sir *Edward Packenham,* and Generals *Gibbs* and *Keane,* with a great number of other officers and about five thousand rank and file killed and wounded; and what appeared to be absolutely incredible, this unexampled slaughter of the

enemy was achieved with the loss of less than twenty killed and wounded on our side. Instead of shouting and rejoicing as in ordinary victories, we seemed mute with astonishment. Yes! when we saw the Englishmen walking with folded arms, looking down on the ground, we had not the heart to exult, especially as the war was now ended. I speak for myself—there was no event that tended so much to reconciliation and forgiveness as this immense slaughter of the English. We felt that this victory was too bloody not to stifle loud exultation.

We had heard of Generals Dearborn, Brown, Scott, Ripley, Gaines and Miller, but no one knew who *General Andrew Jackson* was; but we said that it was a New England name, and we had no doubt but he was a full blooded Yankee, and that there were many of that name in New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Vermont, Rhode Island and Connecticut. But I have since heard that he was a village lawyer in Tennessee, and a native of South Carolina.

The more particulars we hear of this extraordinary victory the more we are astonished. We cannot be too grateful to Heaven for allowing us, a people of yesterday, to wind up the war with the great and terrible nation, the mistress of the ocean, in a manner and style that will inspire respect from the present and future race of men. Nothing now is thought of or talked of, but *New Orleans* and *Jackson,* and *Jackson* and *New Orleans.* We already perceive that we are treated with more respect, and our country spoken of in honorable terms. The language now is—we are all one of the same people. You have all English blood in your veins, and it is no wonder that you fight bravely! Sometimes they have uttered the slang of *The Times,* and cast reflections on the government and on President Madison, but we have always resented it, nor do we ever allow any one to speak disgracefully of our illustrious chief magistrate.

About the middle of the present month, (March) we received

the news of the landing of Napoleon in France, while every one here supposed him snug at Elba. The news came to England, and passed through it like thunder and lightning, carrying with it astonishment and dismay. But as much as they dread, and of course hate Bonaparte, the British cannot but admire his fortune and his glory. There are a number of Frenchmen yet here, and it is impossible for a man to shew more joy at this news from France. They collected together, and shouted *Vive l'Empereur!* and the Yankees joined them, with huzza for Bonaparte, and this we kept up incessantly, to plague the British. The English bear anything from us with more patience, than our expressions of affection for the Emperor Napoleon. Now the fact is, we care no more for the French, than they do for us; and there is but little love between us;—yet we pretend great respect and affection for that nation, and their chief principally to torment overbearing surly John Bull, who thinks that we ought to love nobody but him, while he himself never does any thing to inspire that love.

About the 20th of this month, we received the heart cheering tidings of the RATIFICATION OF THE TREATY OF PEACE, by the PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES. This long expected event threw us all into such a rapturous roar of joy, that we made old Dartmoor shake under us, with our shouts; and to testify our satisfaction we illuminated this *dépôt* of misery. Even Shortland affected joy, and was seen more than once, like Milton's Devil, to *"grin horribly a ghastly smile."*

As there can be now no longer a doubt of our being soon set at liberty, our attention is directed to the agent for prisoners for fixing the time and arranging the means. Mr. Beasley had written that as soon as the Treaty was ratified he would make every exertion for our speedy departure. He must be aware of our extreme impatience to leave this dreary spot, whose brown and grassless surface renders it a place more proper for convicts than an assemblage of patriots.

We are all watching the countenance and conduct of our surly keeper, Shortland; and it is the general opinion that he is deeply chagrined at the idea of no longer domineering over us. It may be also that the peace may reduce him to half pay. I myself am of opinion that he is dissatisfied at the idea of our escaping his fangs with whole skins; and his dark and sullen countenance gathers every day additional blackness.

*April 4th.*—The contractor's clerk being desirous to get off his hands the hard biscuit which had been held in reserve in case of bad weather, attempted to serve it out to the prisoners at this time; but the committee refused to receive it. Nothing but *hard* bread was served out to them this day. In the evening, several hundred of the prisoners entered the market square and demanded their *soft* bread; but it was refused. The officers persuaded them to retire, but they would not, before they received their usual soft bread. The military officers, finding that it was in vain to appease them, as they had but about three hundred militia to guard five or six thousand, complied with their request, and all was quietness and contentment.

During this little commotion Captain Shortland was gone from home. He returned next day, when he expressed his dissatisfaction at the conduct of the military, who he said should not have complied with the demand of the prisoners. As it was, however, past, and the prisoners were tranquil and no signs of disturbance remaining, he grew pacified.

On the 4th of April, we received intelligence, which we supposed correct, that seven cartel ships were to sail from the Thames for Plymouth, to transport us home, and that several more were in preparation. This inspired us with high spirits and good humor; and I distinctly remember that the prisoners appeared to enjoy their amusements, such as playing ball and the like, beyond what I had before observed. We all, in fact, felt light hearted, from

the expectation of soon leaving this dreary abode, to return to our dear homes, and adored country. But how was the scene changed before the light of another day! Dead and wounded men, blood and horror, made up the scenery of this fatal evening!

The best account that could possibly be given is that of a respectable committee, selected from among the best characters in this large assemblage of American prisoners. The greater part of this committee were men of no mean talents. They were not young men, but had arrived at that period of life when judgment is the soundest, and when passion does not betray reason. The anxiety of all to know the truth, and the solemn manner in which the evidenc was collected and given, stamped the transaction with the characters of truth. I did not see the beginning of this affray. I was, with most of the other prisoners, eating my evening's meal in the building, when I heard the alarm bell, and soon after a volley of musketry. There were, I believe, before the alarm bell rung, a few hundred prisoners, scattered here and there about the yards as usual; but I had no idea of any particular collection of them, nor had I any suspicion of any commotion existing, or meditated. But I forbear; and will here insert the report of the committee, in the correctness of which I place an entire confidence:

THE DARTMOOR MASSACRE

Having seen in print several different statements of the massacre of the American prisoners of war at Dartmoor, and on perusal finding, that though they corroborate each other as to the leading facts, yet it seems the public are not in possession of all the particulars necessary to form a proper judgment of the same.

While in prison, we having been members of the committee through whom was transacted all their public business, and through whose hands passed all their correspondence with their agent in London, and having in our possession several documents relating to the before mentioned brutal butchery, we deem it a duty we owe to our murdered countrymen and fellow-citizens in general to have them published.

Respecting the conduct of T. G. SHORTLAND, (commander of the *dépôt* of Dartmoor) prior to the bloody and ever memorable sixth of April, it was a series of continued insult, injury and vexation to the prisoners generally. Incapable of appreciating the beneficial effects of the liberal policy of a gentleman, his sole study appeared to be devising means to render the situation of the prisoners as disagreeable as possible. To instance a few of his proceedings will sufficiently warrant the foregoing assertion. His conduct to the American officers was marked with peculiar baseness and indignity. In the construction of the *dépôt* at Dartmoor, there was a separate prison, built and enclosed for the more commodious accommodation of those officers (prisoners of war) who were not considered by them entitled to a parole. Instead of Shortland allowing those officers to occupy that prison, they were turned into the other prisons promiscuously, with their men. His conduct to the prisoners generally was of the same stamp. There not being, at any time, a sufficient number to occupy all the prisons, he kept the two best, which were built by the Frenchmen during their confinement, and more conveniently fitted for the accommodation of prisoners, shut and unoccupied, while the upper stories of those prisons in which the Americans were put, were in such a state, that on every rain storm the floors were nearly inundated. The pernicious effect this had on the health of the prisoners may be easily judged of by the great mortality that prevailed among them during the last winter season.

Another instance of his murderous disposition, was his ordering his guards to fire into the prisons, when, at any time, a light was seen burning during the night, as specified in the general report. While the Frenchmen were confined in that *dépôt*, it was a custom for the turnkey, with a sentry, to go into each prison, and see the lights extinguished at a stated hour; although frequently lighted again there was no further molestation. Instead of pursuing this plan with the Americans, Shortland gave orders for the guards to fire into the prisons whenever there should be a light burning. Frequently, on the most trivial occasions, he would prevent the prisoners, for ten days at a time, from purchasing in the market, of the country people, such articles of comfort and convenience as their scanty means would admit of. His last act of this kind, was but a short time previous to the massacre, and his alleged reason for it was, that the prisoners would not deliver up to him a man who had made his escape from the black hole, (a place of confinement for criminals) and had taken refuge among the prisoners in general. This man was one of a prize crew, who was confined in that dark and loathsome cell, on a short allowance of provisions, from June, 1814, until the ratification of the treaty. On that man being demanded, the prisoners stated to Shortland, that they did not presume that the British government would expect

them to stand sentry over each other—that he might send his turnkeys and soldiers in and look for the man, but they would not seek him and deliver him up—upon which he ordered the military to fire upon the prisoners, but owing to the coolness and deliberation of the then commanding military officer, in restraining them, this order was not obeyed.

To sum up the whole in a few words, his conduct throughout was marked by the same illiberal prejudice, overbearing insult, and savage barbarity, which characterises the majority of English officers when they have Americans in their power.

The enclosed papers, from No. 1 to 16 inclusive, are the depositions taken by the committee of investigation on the 7th. Colonel Ayre arrived from Plymouth and took command of this *dépôt*. Shortland sent in a message to the committee, requesting their attendance at his office, to which was returned for answer, that considering him a murderer, they were determined to have no communication with him—but added, if the commanding officer from Plymouth had any thing to communicate, they would wait on him; and, at his request, they went up to the gate, where they stated to him all the particulars of the affair.

He expressed great regret for what had occurred, and assured the prisoners that no further violence should be used upon them. In the meantime Shortland made his appearance. Instantly the indignant cry of murderer, scoundrel, villain, burst from the lips of hundreds. The guilty wretch stood appalled, not daring to offer a syllable in vindication of his conduct; but with a pallid visage and trembling step, returned to his guard-house, from whence he was never seen to emerge while we remained there. In the course of the day, a rear admiral and post captain arrived from Plymouth, sent by Sir J. T. Duckworth, commander in chief on that station, to enquire into the transaction; to whom we likewise fully stated, by the committee, all the particulars, together with Shortland's previous infamous conduct. Their scandalous misrepresentation of the same to the admiralty board, as will be seen in their statement No. 20, is truly characteristic of the British official accounts. We likewise wrote to Mr. Beasley on that day, giving him a short history of the affair, but as he did not acknowledge the receipt of the letter, we concluded it had been intercepted. On the 14th we received a letter from him dated the 12th, of which No. 18 is a copy—in answer to which No. 19 is a copy. On the 16th we received another from him, of which No. 20 is a copy; in the interim he had seen a copy of our report, sent by a private conveyance, which seemed to have greatly altered his opinion concerning the affair. In his letter of the 14th was an extract from the statement or report sent him by the admiralty board. On receiving which we wrote to admiral Duckworth, of which No. 21 is a copy.

On the 22d of April, Mr. King, appointed by the American agents at London, and a Mr. Larpent on the part of the government, with a magistrate of the county of Devon, arrived at the *dépôt* to investigate the affair; they were employed the greater part of three days in taking the depositions respecting the same; and though we would not hastily prejudge Mr. King's report, we deem it necessary to state, that our anticipations of it are not of the most favorable nature, from his not appearing to take that interest in the affair which the injuries his countrymen had received demanded, as far the greater part of their time was employed in taking the depositions of Shortland's witnesses, most of whom were the principal actors, on that day and of course were implicated with him in his guilt. On learning Mr. King was about leaving the *dépôt,* we addressed a note to him stating that we had a number of witnesses waiting, whose depositions we conceived would be of importance, and requested him to have them taken; we received to this note no answer, and he immediately left the *dépôt.* The particular points on which those depositions would have borne, related to picking the hole in the wall and breaking the locks of the gate leading into the market square—they would have exonerated the prisoners generally from having any share in those acts or even a knowledge of their having been committed. As these were the two principal points on which Shortland rested his plea of justification, we deemed it highly necessary that they should have been placed in a proper point of view. As for an idea of the prisoners attempting to break out a moment's reflection would convince any impartial man of its improbability. Every prisoner that had a sufficiency of money to defray his expenses could obtain his release and a passport, by applying to Mr. Beasley, or through their correspondence in England; those who had not funds would not have left the *dépôt* had the gates been thrown open, having no means of subsistence in a foreign country, and there being a very hot press of seamen at that time, they knew their risk of being kidnapped was great, and when, by staying a few days longer, they were assured they would be embarked for their native country. The infamous falsehoods circulated in the English prints, of the prisoners having armed themselves with knives, clubs, stones, &c., seized a part of the guard and disarmed them, and other similar reports, are unworthy of notice; for when the disturbance occurred on the fourth of April, concerning bread, the prisoners having burst open the inner gates, had they the least disposition, they might have immolated the whole garrison, as they were completely surprised and panic struck.

The artful policy of the British officers in coupling the transactions of the 6th of April with that of burning Mr. Beasley's effigy, may easily be seen through; the latter was done a fortnight previous, by a few individuals, without its being generally known, or the least disturbance concerning it; and we deem it but justice to state, that whatever negligence Mr. Beasley may have been guilty of,

respecting the affairs of the prisoners, he should be totally exonerated from all blame respecting the massacre.

There was an instance that occurred on the evening of the 6th, which reflects so much credit on the Americans, it should not be passed over in silence. When the brutal soldiery were following the prisoners in the yards, stabbing and firing among them, a lamp lighter, who had come in a few moments previous, ran into No. 3 prison to escape being murdered by his own countrymen; on being recognized, a rope was fixed for hanging him immediately. In this moment of irritation, when their slaughtered and bleeding countrymen lay groaning around them in the agonies of dissolution, such an act of vengeance at that time would not have been singular—but on its being represented to them, by some influential characters, that such a deed would stain the American name, to their honor be it recorded, that humanity triumphed over vengeance, the trembling wretch was released, and told to go—"We disdain to copy after your countrymen, and murder you at this advantage, we will seek a more noble revenge."

We deem it necessary here to remark, as some editors have manifested a disposition to vindicate Shortland's conduct, that, allowing every circumstance to be placed in the most unfavorable point of view for the prisoners, suppose, for a moment, it was their intention to break out, and a number had collected in the market square for that purpose, when, being charged upon by the military, they retreated out of the square into their respective prison-yards, and shut the gates after them without making any resistance whatever; under such circumstances no further opposition could have been expected, and, consequently, their intention must have been completely defeated. What justification can there then be made to appear for the subsequent brutal, unprecedented butchery and mutilation? NONE! The most shameless and barefaced advocates and apologizers for British injustice cannot produce any.

WALTER COLTON,
THOS. B. MOTT,
WM. HOBART,
} *Members of the Committee.*

DEPOSITION No. 1

I, *Addison Holmes,* being solemnly sworn on the holy Evangelists of Almighty GOD, depose and say—

That on the 6th of April, about 6 o'clock in the evening, I was in the market square, where the soldiers were drawn up. There was a number of Americans in the square—to the best of my judgment, between fifty and a hundred. I distinctly heard Captain Shortland order the soldiers to charge on the prisoners,

which they did not do till the order was repeated by their own officers, when they charged, and the prisoners retreated through the gates, which they shut to after them. In this interim I had got behind a sentry box, in the square, and the soldiers went past me. I saw Captain Shortland open the gates, and distinctly heard him give the word to fire, which was not immediately obeyed, the commanding officer of the soldiers observing, that he would not order the men to fire, but that he (Shortland) might do as he pleased. I then saw Capt. Shortland seize hold of a musket, in the hands of a soldier, which was immediately fired—but I am not able to say whether he or the soldier pulled the trigger. At this time I was endeavoring to get through the gate to the prison yard—in so doing several stabs were made at me with bayonets, which I evaded. Immediately after the firing became general, and I retreated, with the remainder of the prisoners, down the yard, the soldiers following and firing on the prisoners; after I had got into No. 3 prison, I heard two vollies fired into the prison, that killed one man and wounded another—and further the deponent saith not.

ADDISON HOLMES.

We, the undersigned, being duly appointed and sworn as a committee to take the depositions of those persons who were eye witnesss of the late horrid massacre, certify that the above deponents, being duly and solemnly sworn on the holy Evangelists of Almighty God, did depose and say as before written, which was severally read to each one who subscribed the same.

*William B. Orne,* *Wm. Hobart,*
*Francis Joseph,* *James Adams,*
*Walter Colton,* *James Boggs.*

[A certificate similar to the foregoing, is attached to each of the depositions. The originals are now in our hands.]

No. II

We, the undersigned, being each severally sworn on the holy Evangelists of Almighty God, depose and say—

That on the 6th April, about six o'clock in the evening, as we were walking in the yard of No. 1 and No. 3 prisons, just before the usual time of turning in, we heard the alarm bell ring. At this time most of the prisoners were in the prisons; a number with us ran up the market square, out of curiosity, to see what was the matter; there were about one hundred collected in the square, and a number were standing by the gates inside the prison yard; the soldiers were drawn up in the upper part of the square; orders were given them to charge, on which the prison-

ers retreated out of the square, and some of the last which came through the gates, shut them to; the soldiers then commenced firing on them through the iron palings, and fired several vollies in succession. The prisoners were, at this time endeavoring to get into their respective prisons, when the soldiers perceived that they were all dispersed from the gates, they followed them into the yard, and continued firing on them; after all the prisoners had got into the prisons, a party of soldiers pursuing them, came up to the door of No. 3 prison, and fired two vollies into the prison, which killed one man and mortally wounded another.

We further solemnly declare, that there was no pre-concerted plan or intention among the prisoners to make an attempt to break out or to resist, in any manner, the authority of the government of the *dépôt*.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *John T. Foster,* | *Charles Perry,* | *Geo. Stinchecomb,* |
| *Elisha Whitten,* | *James Greenlaw,* | *William Perry,* |
| *Isaac L. Burr,* | *Wm. B. Orne,* | *Richard Downing.* |

Done at Dartmoor Prison, this 7th day of April, 1815.

No. III

I, *Andrew Davis, Jun.* being solemnly sworn upon the holy Evangelists of Almighty God, depose and say—

That on the 6th of April, about six o'clock in the evening, while walking in the yard of No. 3 prison, I heard the alarm bell ring, and I went up towards the gate: I saw several men bearing a wounded man towards the gate, whom it appeared had been wounded by the soldiers' bayonets; when the prisoners were retreating out of the square, I heard Captain Shortland order a part of them to let go the wounded man, which some of them did; one of the remaining remonstrated to Capt. Shortland, saying that the man was so badly wounded that it required several to support him; on which Capt. Shortland struck him several blows with his fists, and he appeared to me, from the whole of his conduct, to be much intoxicated with liquor—and further the deponent saith not.

ANDREW DAVIS, Jun.

No. IV

We, the undersigned, depose and say—

That on the 6th of April, in the evening, we were in the yard of No. 1 and No. 3 prisons, when we heard the firing at the gates, and saw the prisoners all endeavoring to get into their respective prisons. In going down towards the

lower doors of the prisons, we saw a party of soldiers, who were posted on the walls, commence firing on the prisoners, and we saw a man fall, who immediately died, and several others were badly wounded before they were able to get into the prisons.

*Amos Cheney,*
*Washington Fox,*
*John Smith,*
*Harris Keeney,*
*James Coffen,*
*Thomas Williams,*
*Henry Casey.*

No. V

*Homer Hull,* after being duly sworn on the holy Evangelists of Almighty God, deposeth and saith—

On the 6th of April, about six o'clock in the evening, I was walking in the yard of No. 7 prison; all being as tranquil among the prisoners as usual, I observed an unusual number of soldiers mounting the walls; and one of them called to one of the prisoners and told him he (the prisoner) *had better go into the prison, as the prisoners would soon be charged upon.* While he was asking the cause of such a proceeding, I heard the alarm bell ringing; I immediately run to the gates leading to the square, when I saw Capt. Shortland at the head of the armed soldiery marching down to the gratings, the prisoners at the same time running to see what was the matter; on the soldiers coming to the gratings Capt. Shortland ordered them to charge, which they did; the prisoners immediately run to their respective prisons; on passing through the inner gate they closed it after them. Then I heard Captain Shortland order the soldiers to FIRE, which they commenced to do in every direction of the yard, when the prisoners were making every effort to reach their prisons. I did not see any violence used on the part of the prisoners, nor do I believe any violence was intended or premeditated.

HOMER HULL.

I, *Joseph C. Morgan,* having been duly sworn, and having read the foregoing depositions, do declare the statement therein mentioned to be true.

J. C. MORGAN.

No. VI

We, the undersigned, depose and say—

That on the sixth of April, about six o'clock in the evening, we were in the market square—we distinctly heard Capt. Shortland give orders to the soldiers

to charge on the prisoners—and after we retreated through the gates, we heard him give orders to the soldiers to FIRE, which, on his repeating several times was executed.

*Joseph Reeves,* *Isaac L. Burr,*
*James Greenlaw,* *Thomas Tindal.*

No. VII

We, the undersigned, depose and say—

That, on the 6th of April, in the evening, after all the prisoners in No. 1 and 3 yards had got into their respective prisons, a party of soldiers came up to the door of No. 3 prison—we were standing near the door at the time, and saw them firse TWO VOLLIES into the prison, which killed one man and wounded another.

*William Scanck,* *John Latham,*
*James Greenlaw,* *John Glass.*

No. VIII

*Enoch Burnham,* having been duly sworn, deposeth—

That he was standing at the market-gate at the time Capt. Shortland came into the market square with a large party of soldiers (it being then about six o'clock). They immediately formed a line in the square—at that time a number of prisoners got into the square from the yard of No. 1 prison, and had advanced a few steps; the soldiers then charged, and the prisoners immediately retreated to the prisons without the least resistance. After the prisoners had retired to the yards of the prison, the soldiery formed a line and commenced firing in the yards, the prison gates being closed by the prisoners; shortly after they kept up a heavy fire, and I saw one man fall. I immediately hastened to No. 5 prison, but on reaching No. 7, I found there was a party of soldiers on the wall, firing from every direction. I then got safe in No. 7, where, after remaining at the north end window a few moments, *I saw a man (a prisoner) leaning against the wall, apparently wounded, with his hands in a supplicating posture—at the same time, I saw several soldiers present and fire at the prisoner and he immediately fell dead on the spot.*

ENOCH BURNHAM.

No. IX

*Edward Coffin,* being duly sworn, deposed, that on the sixth of April, about six o'clock in the afternoon, a few prisoners belonging to No. 5 and 7 prisons,

broke a hole through the wall opposite No. 7 prison, as they said to get a ball out of the barrack yard, which they had lost in their play. After they had broke through the wall, the officers and soldiers that were in the barrack yard, told them to desist or they would fire upon them. Immediately after that the drum beat to arms, and the square was filled with soldiers, and without telling the prisoners to go to their prison, immediately commenced to charge and fire upon them. I immediately started to go to No. 5 prison, and the soldiers on the platforms on the walls commenced firing, and I should think near forty fired at myself and three others, as I am sure there were no other men in sight at that time between No's 5 and 6 prisons. In going round No. 5 cook-house a prisoner was shot and killed, very near me.

*Attest,* HENRY ALLEN. EDWARD COFFIN.

No. X

*Thomas B. Mott,* having been duly sworn, deposed—

About six o'clock in the evening of the 6th of April, I was called on by a number of persons, requesting me as one of the committee to put a stop to some boys whom they said were picking a hole through an inner wall, for which, they said, our provisions would be stopped to pay for. I asked what was their intentions in making the hole? they said it was for the purpose of obtaining a ball which they had lost in their play. I then repaired with a number of respectable men to make them desist; but before we got into the yard a quick firing commenced. On my walking up the yard was met by a number of prisoners retreating to their prisons, much alarmed; one of which I observed was badly wounded, he was bleeding freely from his wound; I could see the yard was clear of prisoners, or not more than two or three to be seen, and they retiring fast. I requested the wounded man to lean upon me, and I would assist him in some medical aid. We had not advanced but a few steps when we were fired on. I advanced, assuring the soldiery we had no hostile intentions. I then took the fainting man in my arms, when a volley of musketry was discharged full at us. I then retired immediately; there was but one of my prison doors unlocked, which was on the back of the prison. On turning the corner of the cook-house, I found myself unexpectedly open to the fire of soldiers on the ramparts of the south wall; their fire was kept up in so brisk a manner that it appeared almost impossible to enter without being shot; but finding my situation very dangerous, I was determined to enter the prison or die in the attempt. For that purpose myself, with a number of others that had been standing behind the wing of the cook-house, sallied out for the purpose of gaining our prison door, when a volley of musket balls showered in amongst us, killing two and wounding others. On

our entering the prison our doors were shut to keep them from firing in. Some little time after the turnkey inquired for me; I went forward to the window; he requested me to deliver up the dead and wounded; I requested him to open the door, which he did, for that purpose. On passing out the dead and wounded, I was insulted by the soldiery, and on my replying was charged upon, and with difficulty escaped without being butchered; they likewise insulted the wounded as I gave them up, and threw the dead down in the mud, and spurned at them in a very unfeeling manner. THO'S B. MOTT.

No. XI

I, *William Mitchell,* being duly sworn upon the holy Evangelists of Almighty God, depose and say—

That, on the evening of the 6th of April, when the alarm commenced, I was in the lower part of No. 1 yard. I walked up towards the gate to learn the cause; when I had got about half way, I heard a single musket fired and immediately after a whole volley. I then saw several men carrying one that was wounded, the soldiers keeping up the whole time a steady fire, and the prisoners all endeavoring to get into the prisons; the lower doors being closed in the interim; it was with much difficulty they could get in, the soldiers pursuing them the whole time and charging them with bayonets; and after getting into the prison, I heard the firing of musketry in all directions round the prison—and further the deponent saith not. WILLIAM MITCHELL.

No. XII

I, *John G. Gatchell,* having been duly sworn, depose and say—

That I was walking in the yard towards the gate. The first I knew, was the soldiers coming into the yard, with Captain Shortland at their head, when an immediate fire began from the soldiers, and one man fell within six feet of me. While in the act of rendering this man assistance, I heard Captain Shortland order the soldiers to kill the damn'd rascal—meaning me; immediately the soldiers came and pricked me with their bayonets, and I was forced to run to the prison at the hazard of my life, and leave the man that was wounded.

JOHN G. GATCHELL.

No. XIII

*James Taylor,* having been duly sworn, deposeth, that he was standing at the gate in the market square, at the time Captain Shortland, with a file of soldiers, entered the square. Captain Shortland ordered a prisoner in the square to go into the prison, when he immediately complied. He then ordered the soldiers

to charge; and instantly observed to the commanding officer of the military—"It is no use to charge on the damn'd Yankee rascals—FIRE"—when this commenced immediately. The prisoners at that time were rushing in the prisons as fast as possible and principally out of the square. After the prisoners were mostly in the prison of No. 4, a boy, of ten years of age, was shot through the body and killed, while in the door passage trying to get in, by the soldiers in the yard, in my presence, I being inside the prison; likewise one other man was shot through the thigh.

JAMES TAYLOR.

No. XIV

*Samuel Lowdy* having been duly sworn, deposeth as follows:

That he was in the yard of prison No. 4, at the time Robert Haywood was shot by the soldiery. He immediately took him up, for the purpose of carrying him to the hospital. In the square he met Capt. Shortland, and said, Capt. Shortland, this man is very badly wounded—I want to carry him to the hospital. Capt. Shortland replied, you damn'd son of a b—h, carry him back to the prison; and he was obliged to comply. After getting to the prison, one of the soldiers called him back, and he went up to the square with the man, and met Capt. Shortland, who said "heave him down there, (pointing to a sentry box) and away with you to the prison,"—at that time they were firing in the different yards. On leaving the square, we found the man was dead.

SAMUEL LOWDY.

*John Battice* having been sworn, corroborates the evidence of Samuel Lowdy.

JOHN BATTICE.

No. XV

*William Potter,* having duly sworn, deposed—

That while passing between No. 5 and 6 prisons, the soldiers commenced firing from the walls in three divisions, at a few of us; at that time there were only four prisoners in sight. After advancing a few steps, I found a man badly wounded. I stopped and picked the man up; during which time the soldiers kept an incessant fire at us, as likewise till we got to the prison of No. 5.

WILLIAM POTTER.

No. XVI

I, *David S. Warren,* being duly sworn on the holy Evangelists of Almighty God, depose and say—

That on the evening of the 6th of April, when the alarm commenced I was in the lower part of the yard No. 1 prison. I walked up to the gate to learn

the cause. I there saw there were a number of prisoners in the market square, and a great number of soldiers drawn up across the same; soon after they charged on the prisoners, who retreated out of the square into their respective prison yards, and shut the gates after them. I saw the soldiers advance up to the gates, and heard Capt. Shortland order them to fire, which they not immediately obeying, I saw him seize hold of a musket in the hands of a soldier, and direct it towards a prisoner, and heard him again repeat, "*fire—G—d damn you, fire!*" Immediately afterwards the firing became general; the prisoners were all endeavoring to get into the prisons, which was attended with much difficulty, all the doors but one being closed—and further the deponent saith not.

DAVID WARREN.

No. XVII

We, the undersigned, being each each severally sworn on the holy Evangelists of Almighty God, for the investigation of the circumstances attending the late horrid massacre, and having heard the depositions of a great number of witnesses, from our own personal knowledge, and from the depositions given in as aforesaid.

*REPORT AS FOLLOWS:*

That on the 6th of April, about six o'clock in the evening, when the prisoners were all quiet in their respective yards, it being about the usual time of turning in for night, and the greater part of the prisoners being then in the prisons, the alarm bell was rung, and many of the prisoners ran up to the market square to learn the occasion of the alarm. There were then drawn up in the square several hundred soldiers, with Capt. Shortland (the agent) at their head; it was likewise observed at the same time, that additional numbers of soldiers were posting themselves on the walls round the prison yards. One of them observed to the prisoners, that they had better go into the prisons, for they would be charged upon directly. This, of course, occasioned considerable alarm among them. In this moment of uncertainty, they were running in different directions, enquiring the cause of the alarm; some toward their respective prisons, and some toward the market square. When about one hundred were collected in the square, Capt. Shortland ordered the soldiers to charge upon them, which orders the soldiers were reluctant in obeying, as the prisoners were using no violence; but on the order being repeated, they made a charge, and the prisoners retreated out of the square into their prison yards, and shut the gate after them. Capt. Shortland, himself, opened the gates, and ordered the soldiers to fire in among the prisoners, who were all retreating in different directions towards their respective prisons. It appears there was some hesitation in the minds of the officers, whether

or not it was proper to fire upon the prisoners in that situation; on which Shortland seized a musket out of the hands of a soldier, which he fired. Immediately after the fire became general, and many of the prisoners were either killed or wounded. The remainder were endeavoring to get into the prisons, when going towards the lower doors, the soldiers on the walls commenced firing on them from that quarter, which killed some and wounded others. After much difficulty, (all the doors being closed in the entrance, but one in each prison) the survivors succeeded in gaining the prisons; immediately after which, parties of soldiers came to the doors of Nos. 8 and 4 prisons, and fired several vollies into them through the windows and doors, which killed one man in each prison, and severely wounded others.

It likewise appears, that the preceding butchery was followed up with a disposition of peculiar inveteracy and barbarity.

One man who was severely wounded in No. 7 prison yard, and being unable to make his way to the prison, was come up with by the soldiers, whom he implored for mercy, but in vain; five of the hardened wretches immediately levelled their pieces at him, and shot him dead on the spot. The soldiers who were on the walls, manifested equal cruelty, by keeping up a constant fire on every prisoner they could see in the yards endeavoring to get into the prisons, when their numbers were very few, and when not the least shadow of resistance could be made or expected. Several of them had got into No. 6 prison cook-house, which was pointed out by the soldiers on the walls, to those who were marching in from the square. They immediately went up and fired into the same, which wounded several.—One of the prisoners ran out, with the intention of gaining his prison, but was killed before he reached the door.

On an impartial consideration, of all circumstances of the case, we are induced to believe that it was a premeditated scheme in the mind of Capt. Shortland, for reasons which we will now proceed to give. As an elucidation of its origin, we will recur back to an event which happened some days previous. Captain Shortland was at the time, absent at Plymouth, but before going, he ordered the contractor, or his clerk, to serve out one pound of indifferent, hard bread, instead of one pound and an half of soft bread, their usual allowance. This the prisoners refused to receive. They waited all day in expectation of their usual allowance being served out; but at sunset, finding this would not be the case, burst open the lower gates, and went up to the store, demanding to have their bread.

The officers of the garrison, on being alarmed, and informed of these proceedings, observed that it was no more than right the prisoners should have their usual allowance, and strongly reprobated Captain Shortland, in withholding it from them. They were accordingly served with their bread, and quietly returned

to their prison. This circumstance, with the censures that were thrown on his conduct, reached the ears of Shortland, on his return home, and he must then have determined on the diabolical plan of seizing the first slight pretext to turn in the military, to butcher the prisoners for the gratification of his malice and revenge. It unfortunately happened, that in the afternoon of the sixth of April, some boys who were playing ball in No. 7 yard, knocked their ball over into the barrack yard, and on the sentry in that yard refusing to throw it back to them, they picked a hole in the wall, to get in after it.

This afforded Shortland his wished for pretext, and he took his measures accordingly. He had all the garrison drawn up in the military walk, additional numbers posted on the walls, and every thing prepared, *before the alarm-bell was rung;* this he naturally concluded would draw the attention of a great number of prisoners towards the gates, to learn the cause of the alarm, while the turnkeys were dispatched into the yards to lock all the doors but one, of each prison, to prevent the prisoners retreating out of the way, before he had sufficiently wreaked his vengeance.

What adds peculiar weight to the belief of its being a premeditated, determined massacre, are,

*First*—The sanguinary disposition manifested on every occasion by Shortland, he having prior to this time ordered the soldiers to fire into the prisons, through the prison windows, upon unarmed prisoners, asleep in their hammocks, on account of a light being seen in the prisons; which barbarous act was repeated several nights successively. That murder was not then committed, was owing to an overruling Providence alone; for the balls were picked up in the prisons, where they passed through the hammocks of men then asleep in them. He having also ordered the soldiers to fire upon the prisoners in the yard of No. 7 prison, because they would not deliver up to him a man who had escaped from his *cachet,* which order the commanding officer of the soldiers refused to obey; and generally, he having seized on every slight pretext to injure the prisoners, by stopping their marketing for ten days repeatedly, and once, a third part of their provisions for the same length of time.

*Secondly*—He having been heard to say, when the boys had picked the hole in the wall, and sometimes before the alarm bell was rung, while all the prisoners were quiet as usual in their respective yards—*"I'll fix the d—'d rascals directly."*

*Thirdly*—His having all the soldiers on their posts, and the garrison fully prepared before the alarm-bell rung. It could not then, of course, be rung to assemble the soldiers, but to alarm the prisoners, and create confusion among them.

*Fourthly*—The soldiers upon the wall, previous to the alarm-bell being rung, informing the prisoners that they would be charged upon directly.

*Fifthly*—The turnkeys going into the yard and closing all the doors but one, in each prison, while the attention of the prisoners was attracted by the alarm-bell. This was done about fifteen minutes sooner than usual, and without informing the prisoners it was time to shut up. It was ever the invariable practice of the turnkeys, from which they never deviated before that night, when coming into the yard to shut up, to halloo to the prisoners, so loud as to be heard throughout the yard, *"turn in, turn in!"* while on that night it was done secretly, that not one man in a hundred knew they were shut; and in particular, their shutting the door of No. 7, prisoners usually go in and out at, and which was formerly always closed last, and leaving one open in the other end of the prison, which was exposed to a cross fire from the soldiers on the walls, and which the prisoners had to pass in gaining the prisons.

It appears to us that the foregoing reasons sufficiently warrant the conclusion we have drawn therefrom.

We likewise believe, from the depositions of men who were eye witnesses of a part of Shortland's conduct, on the evening of the 6th of April, that he was intoxicated with liquor at the time; from his brutality in beating a prisoner then supporting another severely wounded, from the blackguard and abusive language he made use of, and from his frequently having been seen in the same state. His being drunk was, of course, the means of inflaming his bitter enmity against the prisoners, and no doubt was the cause of the indiscriminate butchery, and of no quarter being given.

We here solemnly aver, that there was no pre-concerted plan to attempt a breaking out. There cannot be produced the least shadow of a reason or inducement for that intention, because the prisoners were daily expecting to be released, and to embark on board cartels for their native country. And we likewise solemnly assert, that there was no intention of resisting, in any manner, the authority of this *dépôt*.

N. B. Seven were killed, thirty dangerously wounded, and thirty slightly do. Total, sixty-seven killed and wounded.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| SIGNED, | *Wm. B. Orne,* | *Wm. Hobart,* | *Committee.* |
| | *James Boggs,* | *James Adams,* | |
| | *J. F. Trowbridge,* | *Francis Joseph,* | |
| | *John Rust,* | *Henry Allen,* | |
| | *Walter Colton,* | *Thomas B. Mott,* | |

No. XVIII.

*Letter from Mr. Beasley, agent for American prisoners of war at London, to the Committee of American prisoners of war in Dartmoor prison.*

Agency for American Prisoners of War,
London, April 12, 1815.

Gentlemen—It having been stated in some of the newspapers published here, that the American government intended to send some ships of war bound to the Mediterranean, to this country, for the purpose of completing their crews from among the prisoners; and having been informed that this idea has got among the prisoners, it becomes my duty to request, that you will inform them that the fact is not so.

I have already informed you of the measures which had been taken to provide conveyances for the prisoners. You will let them know that eight large transports have been engaged, some of which must be now at Plymouth; others will follow, until the whole of the prisoners are sent off.

It is much to be lamented, that at a moment when every exertion was making to restore them to their country, *they should have fallen into an excess which has proved fatal to some.* And I am at a loss to conceive how they could, under such circumstances, pretend to say, that the cause of this unfortunate but shameful conduct, was the neglect of their government or its agent. This, I am informed, they have stated to the officers who were sent to examine into the affair. I am, gentleman, your obedient servant,

R. G. BEASLEY.

*The Committee of the American prisoners, Dartmoor.*

No. XIX.

Dartmoor, April 14, 1815.

Sir—Yours of the 12th inst. came to hand this morning. It is with astonishment we note its contents, that the officers who came to inquire into the circumstances of the late unfortunate affair, should have informed you, that the prisoners stated to them, the cause of that event was that their government or its agent had neglected them. This is a most deliberate falsehood, let your authors be who they may. We deny not that the anxiety of the prisoners to get released from here has been great; they have even censured you as being dilatory in your preparations for that purpose—but their government they have never implicated—and you may rest assured that they have too much of the genuine spirit

of Americans, to apply to the officers of a foreign government for relief, or to make them a party in any dispute with the government or its agents.

We solemnly assure you, that whatever anxiety among the prisoners, or want of confidence in your exertions, as above stated, may have existed among them, that it can in no way be construed to have any collusion or connection with the late event, and was expressly so stated to the Admiral, who came here from Plymouth.

We, on the contrary, in the name of the five thousand prisoners confined here, accuse Shortland of a deliberate, pre-determined act of atrocious murder—we have sufficient evidence in our possession to prove it to the world, and we call on you (there being at present no accredited minister or *chargé des affaires* at the court of London) to make strict inquiries into the circumstances of the case, and procure all the evidence necessary for a proper investigation into the same; for well do we feel assured that our government will not thus suffer its citizens to be sacrificed, for the gratification of national prejudice, malice or revenge of the petty officers of a foreign state.

We are at no loss to impute the misrepresentation of the British officers to their proper motives. They artfully wish to excite in your breast, a spirit of enmity and resentment against the prisoners, that you might use less perseverance, or feel yourself less interested in making the proper inquiries into the late affair.

With much respect we remain, sir, your most obedient and humble servants,

WILLIAM HOBART,
WALTER COLTON,
HENRY ALLEN.

*R. G. Beasley, Esq., Agent for Prisoners, London.*

No. XX.

*2d Letter from Mr. Beasley to the American Committee.*

Agency for American Prisoners of War,
London, April 14, 1815.

Gentlemen—My letter to you of the 12th inst. on the subject of the melancholy event, was written under an impression which I received from a report of it, transmitted to me by this government: I have since received your report of the circumstances. Had I been in possession of the information therein con-

tained, the letter would have been differently expressed. I am, gentlemen, your obedient servant.

R. G. BEASLEY.

*Committee of American Prisoners, Dartmoor.*

P. S. I subjoin an extract of the report alluded to from the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty:

"The rioters, it appears, endeavored to OVERPOWER the guard, to force the prison, and had actually seized the arms of some of the soldiers, and made a breach in the walls of the depot, when the guard found itself obliged to have recourse to their fire arms, and five of the rioters were killed, and thirty-four wounded, after which the tumult subsided, and the depot was placed in a state of tranquility and security.

"Admiral Sir J. T. Duckworth, Commander in Chief at Plymouth, having received information of this unfortunate event, lost no time in directing Rear Admiral Sir Josias Rowley, Baronet, K. C. B. and Schornberg, the two senior officers at that port, to proceed to Dartmoor, and to enquire into the circumstances. Those officers accordingly repaired to the depot, where they found, on examination of the officers of the depot, and *all the American prisoners who were called before them,* that the circumstances of the riot were as before stated; but that no excuse could be assigned for the conduct of the prisoners, but their impatience to be released; and the Americans unanimously declared, that their complaint of delay was not against the British government, but against their own, which ought to have sent means for their early conveyance home, and in replies to distinct questions to that effect, they declared they had no ground of complaint whatsoever."

No. XXI.

DARTMOOR, APRIL 17, 1815.

*To Rear Admiral Sir J. T. Duckworth,*

SIR—The officers whom you sent to this place to inquire into the circumstance of the unfortunate occurrence of the 6th inst. whatever right they had to represent the conduct of Capt. Shortland in the most favorable manner, we conceive it an act of gross injustice that they should have given to you such a false and scandalous representation of what they were told by the prisoners.

In the report from the admiralty board to Mr. Beasley, (a copy of which he has transmitted to us) it is stated that the prisoners, when called upon to give an account of the circumstances of the 6th, exonerated Capt. Shortland and the English government from any blame respecting the same, and accused their own government and its agent of being the cause.

We, on the contrary, solemnly declare that it was expressly stated to Admiral Rowley, that whatever anxiety might have existed among the prisoners for a speedy release, could, in no way whatever, be construed to have had any collusion or connexion with that event. That the prisoners, so far from having any idea of attempting to break out, if the gates had been opened, and every one suffered to go who might wish to do so, not one in a hundred would have left the prison, having no means of subsistence in a foreign country, and being likewise liable to IMPRESSMENT, when by staying a few days longer, they would, probably, be embarked for their native country.

They, on the contrary, accused Capt. Shortland of being the sole mover and principal perpetrator of the unprovoked and horrid butchery.

Conceiving, from your well known character in the British navy for integrity and candor, that you would not wish to have your name the medium of imposing such a gross misrepresentation and such direct falsehoods on the admiralty board and the British public, we have taken the liberty of thus addressing you, and have the honor to subscribe ourselves your most obedient and very humble servants,

*Wm. Hobart, Walter Colton, Henry Allen, Thomas B. Mott, Wm. B. Orne,*
*Committee of American Prisoners, Dartmoor.*

[In addition to the documents furnished by the committee of the Dartmoor prisoners, we lay the following affidavit of Archibald Taylor before the public. Will people doubt this evidence also? Is it likely that common soldiers, hired assassins, would make use of familiar expressions from their own impulses? or is it not much more conformable to common sense to believe that this was the language held by their officers, and that they echoed it.]

*City of New York, ss.*

*Archibald Taylor,* late commander of the *Paul Jones* private armed vessel of war, being duly sworn, doth depose and say—

That he was a prisoner in Dartmoor prison at the time of the late massacre of the Americans; that after the affair of the 6th of April, and on the night of the same day, he was in the prison No. 3, assisting Thomas Smith, late his boatswain, who was shot through his leg by the soldiers in the yard, when an order was received to have all the wounded removed from the prisons to the hospital; and while this deponent was carrying the said Thos. Smith to the door of the prison, to deliver him to the guards selected to receive him, some of the

soldiers observed to this deponent, "this is in turn for the affair at New Orleans, where you killed our men, and now we have our revenge"—and further this deponent saith not.

ARCHIBALD TAYLOR.

Sworn before me, this 28th June, 1815.

AARON H. PALMER, *Notary Public.*

## KING AND LARPENT'S REPORT.

*Plymouth, 18th April,* 1815.

We the undersigned commissioners, appointed on behalf of our respective governments, to inquire into and report upon, the unfortunate occurrence of the 6th April inst. at Dartmoor Prison; having carefully perused the proceedings of the several courts of inquiry, instituted immediately after that event, by the orders of Admiral Sir John T. Duckworth and Major-General Brown, respectively, as well as the depositions taken at the coroner's inquest upon the bodies of the prisoners, who lost their lives upon that melancholy occasion; upon which inquest the jury found a verdict of justifiable homicide; proceeded immediately to the examination upon oath in the presence of one or more of the magistrates of the vicinity, of all the witnesses, both American and English, who offered themselves for that purpose; or who could be discovered as likely to afford any material information on the subject, as well as those who had been previously examined before the coroner, as otherwise, to the number in the whole of about eighty. We further proceeded to a minute examination of the prisons, for the purpose of clearing up some points which, upon the evidence alone, were scarcely intelligible; obtaining from the prisoners, and from the officers of the *dépôt,* all the necessary assistance and explanation; and premising, that we have been from necessity compelled to draw many of our conclusions from statements and evidence highly contradictory, we do now make upon the whole proceedings the following report:—

During the period which has elapsed since the arrival in this country of the account of the ratification of the treaty of Ghent, an increased degree of restlessness and impatience of confinement appears to have prevailed amongst the American prisoners at Dartmoor, which, though not exhibited in the shape of any violent excesses, has been principally indicated by threats of breaking out if not soon released.

On the 4th of this month in particular, only two days previous to the events which are the subject of this inquiry, a large body of the prisoners rushed into

the market-square, from whence, by the regulations of the prison they are excluded, demanded bread instead of biscuit, which had on that day been issued by the officers of the *dépôt;* their demands having been then almost immediately complied with, they returned to their own yards, and the employment of force on that occasion became unnecessary.

On the evening of the 6th, about six o'clock, it was clearly proved to us, that a breach or hole had been made in one of the prison walls, sufficient for a full-sized man to pass, and that others had been commenced in the course of the day near the same spot, though never completed.

That a number of the prisoners were over the railing erected to prevent them from communicating with the centinels on the walls, which was of course forbidden by the regulations of the prison, and that in the space between the railing and those walls they were tearing up pieces of turf, and wantonly pelting each other in a noisy and disorderly manner.

That a much more considerable number of the prisoners was collected together at that time in one of their yards near the place where the breach was effected, and that although such collection of prisoners was not unusual at other times (the Gambling Tables being commonly kept in that part of the yard) yet, when connected with the circumstances of the breach, and the time of the day, which was after the hour the signal for the prisoners to retire to their respective prisons had ceased to sound, it became a natural and just ground of alarm to those who had charge of the *dépôt.*

It was also in evidence that in the building formerly the petty officers' prison, but now the guard barrack, which stands in the yard to which the hole in the wall would serve as a communication, a part of the arms of the guard who were off duty, were usually kept in the racks, and though there was no evidence that this was, in any respect, the motive which induced the prisoners to make the opening in the wall, or even that they were ever acquainted with the fact, it naturally became at least a further cause of suspicion and alarm, and an additional reason for precaution.

Upon these grounds Capt. Shortland appears to use to have been justified in giving the order, which about this time he seems to have given, to sound the alarm bell, the usual signal for collecting the officers of the *dépôt* and putting the military on the alert.

However reasonable and justifiable this was as a measure of precaution, the effects produced thereby in the prisons, but which could not have been intended, were most unfortunate, and deeply to be regretted. A considerable number of

the prisoners in the yards where no disturbance existed before, and who were either already within their respective prisons, or quietly retiring as usual towards them, immediately upon the sound of the bell rushed back from curiosity (as it appears) towards the gates, where by that time the crowd had assembled, and many who were at the time absent from their yards, were also from the plan of the prison, compelled, in order to reach their own homes, to pass the same spot, and thus that which was merely a measure of precaution, in its operation increased the evil it was intended to prevent. Almost at the same instant that the alarm bell rung, (but whether before or subsequent is upon the evidence doubtful, though Capt. Shortland states it positively as one of his further reasons for causing it to ring) some one or more of the prisoners broke the iron chain, which was the only fastening of No. 1 gate, leading into the market square by means of an iron bar; and a very considerable number of the prisoners immediately rushed towards that gate; and many of them began to press forwards as fast as the opening would permit into the square.

There was no direct proof before us of previous concert or preparation on the part of the prisoners, and no evidence of their intention or disposition to effect their escape on this occasion, excepting that which arose by inference from the whole of the above detailed circumstances connected together.

The natural and almost irresistible inference to be drawn, however, from the conduct of the prisoners by Capt. Shortland and the military was, that an intention on the part of the prisoners to escape was on the point of being carried into execution, and it was at least certain that they were by force passing beyond the limits prescribed to them at a time when they ought to have been quietly going in for the night. It was also in evidence that the outer gates of the market square were usually opened about this time to let the bread wagons pass and repass to the store, although at the period in question they were in fact closed.

Under these circumstances, and with these impressions necessarily operating upon his mind, and a knowledge that if the prisoners once penetrated through the square the power of escape was almost to a certainty afforded to them, if they should be so disposed; Capt. Shortland in the first instance proceeded down the square towards the prisoners, having ordered a part of the different guards, to the number of about fifty only at first, (though they were increased afterwards) to follow him. For some time both he and Dr. Magrath endeavored by quiet means and persuasion, to induce the prisoners to return to their own yards, explaining to them the fatal consequences which must ensue if they refused, as the military would in that case be necessarily compelled to employ force. The guard was by this time formed in the rear of Capt. Shortland, about two-thirds

of the way down the square—the latter is about one hundred feet broad, and the guard extended nearly all across. Capt. Shortland, finding that persuasion was all in vain, and that although some were induced by it to make an effort to retire, others pressed on in considerable numbers, at last ordered about 15 file of the guard, nearly in front of the gate which had been forced, to charge the prisoners back to their own yards.

The prisoners were in some places so near the military, that one of the soldiers states that he could not come fairly down to the charge; and the military were unwilling to act as against an enemy. Some struggling ensued between the parties, arising partly from intention, but mainly from the pressure of those behind preventing those in front from getting back. After some little time, however, this charge appears to have been so far effective, and that with little or no injury to the prisoners, as to have driven them for the most part quite down out of the square, with the exception of a small number who continued their resistance about No. 1 gate.

A great crowd still remained collected after this in the passage between the square and the prisoners' yards, and in the part of these yards in the vicinity of the gates.—This assemblage still refused to withdraw, and according to most of the English witnesses and some of the American, was making a noise, hallowing, insulting and provoking, and daring the military to fire, and according to the testimony of several of the soldiers, and some others were pelting the military with large stones, by which some of them were actually struck. This circumstance is, however, denied by many of the American witnesses; and some of the English, upon having the question put to them, stated that they saw no stones thrown previously to the firing, although their situation at the time was such as to enable them to see most of the proceedings in the square.

Under these circumstances the firing commenced—With regard to any order having been given to fire the evidence is very contradictory. Several of the Americans swear positively, that Capt. Shortland gave that order; but the manner in which from the confusion of the moment, they described this part, of the transation, is so different in its details that it is very difficult to reconcile their testimony. Many of the soldiers and other English witnesses, heard the word given by some one, but no one of them can swear it was by Capt. Shortland, or by any one in particular, and some, amongst whom is the officer commanding the guard, think, if Capt. Shortland had given such an order, that they must have heard it, which they did not. In addition to this Capt. Shortland denies the fact; and from the situation, which he appears to have been placed at the time, even according to the American witnesses, in front of the soldiers, it may appear somewhat improbable that he should then have given such an order.

But, however, it may remain a matter of doubt whether the firing first began in the square by order, or was a spontaneous act of the soldiers themselves, it seemed clear that it was continued and renewed both there and elsewhere without orders; and that on the platforms, and in several places about the prison, it was certainly commenced without any authority.

The fact of an order having been given at first, provided the firing was under the existing circumstances justifiable, does not appear very material in any other point of view, than as shewing a want of self possession and discipline in the troops if they should have fired without order.

With regard to the above most important consideration, of whether the firing was justifiable or not, we are of opinion, under all the circumstances of the case, from the apprehension which the soldiers might fairly entertain, owing to the numbers and conduct of the prisoners, that this firing to a certain extent was justifiable in a military point of view, in order to intimidate the prisoners, and compel them thereby to desist from all acts of violence, and to retire as they were ordered, from a situation in which the responsibility of the agents, and the military, could not permit them with safety to remain.

From the fact of the crowd being so close and the firing at first being attended with very little injury, it appears probable that a large proportion of the muskets were, as stated by one or two of the witnesses, levelled over the heads of the prisoners; a circumstance in some respects to be lamented, as it induced them to cry out "blank cartridges," and merely irritated and encouraged them to renew their insults to the soldiery, which produced a repetition of the firing in a manner much more destructive.

The firing in the square having continued for some time, by which several of the prisoners sustained injuries, the greater part of them appear to have been running back with the utmost precipitation and confusion to their respective prisons, and the cause for further firing seems at this period to have ceased. It appears, accordingly, that Capt. Shortland was in the market square exerting himself and giving orders to that effect, and that Lieut. Fortye had succeeded in stopping the fire of his part of the guard.

Under these circumstances, it is very difficult to find any justification for the further continuance and renewal of the firing, which certainly took place both in the prison yards and elsewhere; though we have some evidence of subsequent provocation given to the military, and resistance to the turnkeys in shutting the prisons, and of stones being thrown out from within the prison doors.

The subsequent firing rather appears to have arisen from the state of individual irritation and exasperation on the part of the soldiers, who followed the prison-

ers into their yards, and from the absence of nearly all of the officers who might have restrained it, as well as from the great difficulty of putting an end to a firing when once commenced under such circumstances. Capt. Shortland was from this time busily occupied with the turnkeys in the square, receiving and taking care of the wounded. Ensign White remained with his guard at the breach, and Lieuts. Ayelyne and Fortye, the only other subalterns known to have been present, continued with the main bodies of their respective guards.

The time of the day, which was the officers' dinner hour, will in some measure explain this, as it caused the absence of every officer from the prison whose presence was not indispensable there. And this circumstance which has been urged as an argument to prove the intention of the prisoners to take this opportunity to escape, tended to increase the confusion, and to prevent those great exertions being made which might perhaps have obviated a portion at least of the mischief which ensued.

At the same time that the firing was going on in the square, a cross fire was also kept up from several of the platforms on the walls round the prisoners where the centries stand by straggling parties of soldiers who ran up there for that purpose. As far as this fire was directed to disperse the men assembled round the breach, for which purpose it was most effectual, it seems to stand upon the same ground as that in the first instance in the square—That part which it is positively sworn was directed against straggling parties of prisoners running about the yards and endeavoring to enter in the few doors which the turnkeys, according to their usual practice, had left open, does seem, as stated, to have been wholly without object or excuse, and to have been a wanton attack upon the lives of defenseless, and at that time, unoffending individuals.

In the same, or even more severe terms, we must remark upon what was proved as to the firing in the door-ways of the prisons, more particularly into that of No. 3 prison, at a time when the men were in crowds at the entrance. From the position of the prison and the door, and from the marks of the balls which were pointed out to us, as well as from the evidence, it was clear this firing must have proceeded from soldiers a few feet from the door-way; and although it was certainly sworn that the prisoners were at the time of part of the firing at least, continuing to insult and occasionally to throw stones at the soldiers, and that they were standing in the way of, and impeding the turnkey, who was there for the purpose of closing the door, yet still there was nothing stated which could, in our view, at all justify such excessively harsh and severe treatment of helpless and unarmed prisoners, when all idea of escape was at an end.

Under these impressions, we used every endeavor to ascertain if there was

the least prospect of identifying any of the soldiers who had been guilty of the particular outrages here alluded to, or of tracing any particular death, at that time to the firing of any particular individual, but without success; and all hopes of bringing the offenders to punishment would seem to be at an end.

In conclusion, we, the undersigned, have only to add, that whilst we lament, as we do most deeply, the unfortunate transaction which has been the subject of this inquiry, we find ourselves unable to suggest any steps to be taken as to those parts of it which seem to call for redress and punishment.

(Signed) CHARLES KING,
FRANCIS SEYMOUR LARPENT.

*Plymouth, April 26, 1815.*

Sir—In pursuance of the instructions received from Messrs. Clay and Gallatin, I have now the honor to transmit you the report prepared by Mr. Larpent and myself on behalf of our respective governments, in relation to the unfortunate transactions at Dartmoor Prison of War, on the 6th of the present month. Considering it of much importance that the report, whatever it might be, should go forth under our joint signatures, I have forborne to press some of the points which it involves, as far as otherwise I might have done, and it therefore may not be improper in this letter to enter into some little explanation of such parts of the report.

Although it does appear that a part of the prisoners were on that evening in such a state, and under such circumstances as to have justified, in the view which the commander of the depot could not but take of it, the intervention of the military force, and even in a strict sense, the first use of fire arms, yet I cannot but express it as my settled opinion, that by conduct a little more temporising this dreadful alternative of firing upon unarmed prisoners might have been avoided. Yet as this opinion has been the result of subsequent examination, and after having acquired a knowledge of the comparatively harmless state of the prisoners, it may be but fair to consider, whether in such a moment of confusion and alarm, as that appears to have been, the officer commanding could have fairly estimated his danger, or have measured out with precision the extent and nature of the force necessary to guard against it.

But when the firing became general, as it afterwards appears to have been, and caught with electric rapidity from the square to the platforms, there is no plea nor shadow of excuse for it, except in the personal exasperation of the soldiery, nor for the more deliberate, and therefore more unjustifiable firing which took place into three of the prisons, No. 1, 3 and 4, but more particularly

into No. 3, after the prisoners had retired into them, and there was no longer any pretence of apprehensions, as to their escape.—Upon this ground, as you, sir, will perceive by the report, Mr. Larpent and myself had no difference of opinion, and I am fully persuaded that my own regret was not greater than his at perceiving how hopeless would be the attempt to trace to any individuals of the military these outrageous proceedings.

As to whether the order to fire came from Capt. Shortland, I yet confess myself unable to form any satisfactory opinion, though perhaps the bias of my mind is, that he did give such an order. But his anxiety and exertions to stop it after it had continued for some little time, are fully proved, and his general conduct previous to this occurrence, as far as we could with propriety enter into such details, appears to have been characterized with great fairness, and even kindness, in the relation in which he stood towards the prisoners.

On the subject of any *complaints against their own government* existing among the prisoners, it was invariably answered to several distinct questions put by me on that head, *that none whatever existed or had been expressed by them,* although they confessed themselves to entertain some animosity against Mr. Beasley, to whom they attributed their detention in this country; with what justice, you sir, will be better able to judge. They made no complaint whatsoever as to their provisions and general mode of living, and treatment in the prison.

I have transmitted to Mr. Beasley, a list of the killed and wounded on this melancholy occasion, with a request that he would forward it to the United States, for the information of their friends at home, and I am pleased to have it in my power to say, that the wounded are for the most part doing well.

I have also enclosed to Mr. Beasley the notes taken by me of the evidence adduced before us, with a request that he would have them fairly copied, as also a copy of the depositions taken before the coroner, and desired him to submit them to you when in order.

I cannot conclude, sir, without expressing my high sense of the impartiality and manly fairness with which this enquiry has been conducted on the part of Mr. Larpent, nor without mentioning that every facility was afforded to us in its prosecution, as well by the military officers commanding here and at the prison, as by the magistrates in the vicinity.

I have the honor to be, with much respect, your most obedient humble servant.

(Signed) CHARLES KING.

*His Excellency John Q. Adams, &c., &c.*

# DARTMOOR PRISON.

*A Return of American prisoners of war killed and wounded in an attempt to force the military guard on the evening of the 6th of April,* 1815.

| Current No. | Number on general entry book. | | Name. | Quality. | Ship. | Whether man of war, merch. vessel, or privateer. | Remarks. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 4884 | KILLED. | William Leveridge, | Seaman, | Enterprize, prize to Saratoga. | Privateer, | |
| 2 | 970 | | James Mann, | do. | Siro, | Let. of marque | |
| 3 | 3134 | | John Haywood, | do. | *Gave himself up from H. M. S. Scipion.* | | Impressed. |
| 4 | 1347 | | Joseph T. Johnson, | do, | Paul Jones, | Privateer, | |
| 5 | 3936 | | John Washington, | do. | Rolla, | Merch. vessel, | |
| 1 | 6520 | | Thomas Jackson, | Boy, | *Gave himself up from H. M. S. Prontes.* | | Imp. died April 7, 1815 |
| 2 | 2647 | | James Campbell, | Seaman, | *Gave himself up from H. M. S. Volontaire.* | | Imp. died April 7, 1815 |
| 3 | 5789 | | John Gier, | do. | Rambler, | Merch. vessel, | |
| 4 | 1722 | | William Penn, | do. | Dispatch, | do. | Impressed. at London. |
| 5 | 5003 | | Cornelius Garrison, | do. | Invincible, | Let. of marque | |
| 6 | 3614 | | H. Hontealm, | do. | Homeby, p. G. Tom, | Privateer, | |
| 7 | 1965 | | Robert Willett, | do. | *Gave himself up from H. M. S. Andromache.* | | Impressed. |
| 8 | 5326 | | John Peach, | do. | Enterprize, | Privateer, | |
| 9 | 2148 | | Edw. Wittlebark, | do. | *Gave himself up from H. M. S. Ro. William.* | | Impressed. |
| 10 | 1881 | | James Thornbull, | Boy, | Elbridge Gerry, | Privateer, | |
| 11 | 3652 | | James Wells, | Seaman, | Thorn, | do. | |
| 12 | 1236 | | Philip Ford, | do. | *Gave himself up from H. M. S. Sult.* | | Impressed. |
| 13 | 685 | WOUNDED. | James Bell, | do. | J. Barlow, | Mercht. vessel, | |
| 14 | 94 | | John Grey, | do. | St. Martin's Planter, | do. | |
| 15 | 436 | | Wm. Leversage, | do. | Magdalene, | do. | |
| 16 | 1024 | | Edward Gardner, | do. | Joseph, | do. | |
| 17 | 1546 | | Stephen Phipps, | do. | Zebra, | Let. of marque | |
| 18 | 486 | | John Roberts, | do. | Two Brothers, | | Impressed at Cork. |
| 19 | 1640 | | Thomas Smith, | do. | Paul Jones, | Privateer, | |
| 20 | 1819 | | Caleb Codding, | do. | *Gave himself up from H. M. S. Swiftsure.* | | Impressed. |
| 21 | 5015 | | Jacob Davis, | do. | Charlotte p. to Mammoth, | Privateer, | |
| 22 | 2013 | | James Esdaille, | do. | G. Tompkins, | do. | |
| 23 | 380 | | Peter Wilson, | do. | Virginia Planter, | Merch. vessel, | |
| 24 | 2884 | | William Blake, | do. | *Gave himself up from H. M. S. Republic,* | | Impressed. |
| 25 | 338 | | John Hogabets, | 2d Mate | Good Friends | Merch. vessel. | |
| 26 | 4153 | | Ephraim Lincoln, | Seaman, | Argus, | do. | |
| 27 | 4493 | | Thomas Findlay, | do. | Enterprize, | Privateer, | |
| 28 | 4109 | | John Howard, | do. | Flash, | do. | |
| 29 | 1228 | | Joseph Masick, | do. | *Gave himself up from H. M. S. Furieux.* | | Impressed. |
| 30 | 6123 | | Robert Fillez, | do. | Grand Turk, | Privateer. | |
| 31 | 1812 | | John Willett, | do. | *Gave himself up from H. M. S. Rosario.* | | Impressed. |
| 32 | 3080 | | John Perry, | do. | *Gave himself up from H. M. S. Tiger.* | | Impressed. |
| 33 | 2662 | | John Wilson. | do. | *Gave himself up from H. M. S. Fortuna.* | | Impressed. |

(Signed) THOMAS GEORGE SHORTLAND, *Agent.*

(Signed) GEORGE MAGRATH, *Surgeon.*

## REPLY TO KING AND LARPENT'S REPORT.

*To the People of the United States.*

Having perused, with attention, the report of Mr. CHARLES KING, and FRANCIS SEYMOUR LARPENT, on their examination of the *unfortunate* occurrence at Dartmoor, on the 6th of April last—

WE, the undersigned, being there at the time this *unfortunate* occurrence took place, deem it a duty we owe to the surviving sufferers of that bloody transaction, to our fellow-citizens, and ourselves to make some remarks upon such a singular report. Although we presume the door is forever closed against any further investigation of that ever to be remembered transaction, we cannot help, however contrary it may be to our wishes to irritate the public feeling, already so much excited, entering into a detailed investigation of that report.

In the committee's address to the public on the 27th of June last, preceding the publication of the affidavits of some of the prisoners, taken on that melancholy affair, they have justly anticipated what would be the report of the commissioners, after their investigation; they drew their conclusions from the singular manner in which the investigation was conducted. The report commences by stating, that, after carefully perusing the proceedings of the several courts of inquiry, instituted immediately after that event, they procceeded immediately to the examination, upon oath, of ALL the witnesses, both American and English, who offered themselves for that purpose. How far this part of the report is correct, we shall leave the public to judge.

On the arrival of the commissioners at the depot, the committee of the prison were sent for; after waiting some time at the door of the room, where the enquiry was held, they were called in separately and questioned as to their knowledge of the transactions of the sixth. The depositions of those who were eye witnesses of that disgraceful scene were taken; some were questioned as to the general conduct of Shortland, previous to that affair; it was represented by them as it would have been by all, as being universally *cruel, overbearing and oppressive.* After having finished the examination of the committee, they requested them to bring forward all the evidence that was likely to cast any light on the subject of enquiry. They accordingly, returned into the prison, and drew up a list of the names of some of the eye-witnesses of that day's occurrence.—Although they could have brought hundreds to the examination, and the sum of whose evidence would have amounted to the same, yet, the committee not wishing to impede the progress of the investigation, by a redundancy of evidence, they were careful to select such men as were most likely to give a clear and distinct ac-

count of all the circumstances as they occurred, under their knowledge, taking care, at the same time, to procure those whose different situations afforded them an opportunity of witnessing that transaction, from the commencement to the close. Such was the evidence the committee had selected, to the number of about fifty, VERY FEW of whom were ever examined, although they were kept waiting in the turnkey's lodge (where they were ordered to stay until called for) during the hours of investigation. In the course of the enquiry, it seems, the commissioners found it necessary to survey the particular situation of the prisons, and the points from which the different attacks were made; they accordingly came into the yard for that purpose, and after having been shown all the places from whence the firing was continued, where the crowd of prisoners had assembled on the first alarm, and where the hole, so much made a handle of, had been made —after a slight survey of these different places, they retired into their session room, leaving orders, once more, with the committee to hold their evidence in readiness, as they would soon be called upon for examination. The committee replied that they had been in readiness since the commencement of the enquiry, and were then only waiting their orders to appear before them, feeling happy in the idea of having it in their power to show to the court, and to the world, by the evidence they had to produce, that the attack of Shortland on the defenseless prisoners, was premeditated and unjustifiable in ANY point of view.

After attending in the turnkey's lodge during the sitting of the commissioners, until the middle of the third day, without having but very few of the evidences sent for, and being fearful that they might be waiting for them, the committee sent them word that the witnessess were still in attendance. No answer being returned to this message for some time, the committee became uneasy on account of the long examination of the officers, soldiers, clerks, and turnkeys, attached to the depot, without admitting the prisoners to an equal privilege; and understanding the commissioners were about closing their enquiry, they again sent word they would be glad to have an interview for a few moments, for the purpose of explaining the nature of their evidence, and the necessity of a full hearing on both sides of the question. NO ANSWER BEING RETURNED TO THIS REQUEST, and still waiting with the anxious hope that they would soon send for some of us when we were told by one of the turnkeys, that the commissioners were prepared to depart, having finished the examination. Astonished to think they meant to leave the depot without clearly investigating the circumstances that were the cause of their meeting, and feeling indignant that a cause of so much importance should be passed over so partially, the committee addressed a note to Mr. King, begging him not to shut the door of communication against the prisoners, by closing the inquiry without giving them the privilege of a

hearing, as the greatest part of our witnesses were yet unexamined, and their evidence they conceived to be of the utmost importance to the investigation. *No reply was made to this note;* but, in a few moments, we were told, that the commissioners had left the depot. How far they are justifiable in saying they examined ALL the evidences that offered themselves, we think is sufficiently shewn.

The commissioners next go to mention the insurrection of the prisoners about the bread, on the 4th, two days previous to the events, the subject of that enquiry. Although the report correctly states, the prisoners quietly returned to their own yards, after their demands having been complied with, Mr. King forgot to mention, that it was clearly represented to him, had the prisoners been so disposed on that night, they could have easily made their escape. Although that transaction had nothing to do, as relates to the prisoners, with the events of the sixth, we merely represent this circumstance to shew, that there was no intention whatever on their part to break out of the prison, as Shortland and his adherents have attempted to prove.

The report now goes on to mention, that on the evening of the sixth of April, about six o'clock in the evening, a hole was made in one of the walls of the prison sufficient for a full-sized man to pass, and others had been commenced, but never completed, and that a number of the prisoners were over the railing erected to prevent them from communicating with the sentinels on the walls, and that they were tearing up pieces of turf and wantonly pelting each other in a noisy manner.

As to the hole made in the wall, we believe the causes and reasons have been already sufficiently explained by the affidavits laid before the public. With respect to the prisoners between the iron paling and the wall, it could have been if it was not, easily explained to Mr. King, had he given an opportunity. It seems, that on the afternoon of the 6th, some of the prisoners having obtained *leave* of the sentinels on the walls to go over and lay upon the grass, others seeing them laying so much at their ease, went over to enjoy the same privilege; and as the sentinels made no objection to this proceeding, the number was soon increased to such a degree, that it became no longer an enjoyment to those who first obtained the privilege; some scuffling then ensued among themselves, and they began to pelt each other with turf and old shoes principally in play, and among so many no doubt, their must have been considerable noise; but how they can possibly connect this circumstance with the hole made in the wall, is entirely out of our power to conceive, as the iron railings separated them from the pretended breach in the wall, and distant from it more than half the length of the yard; of course, had the hole been intended as a breach, the iron paling would have become a barrier, instead of facilitating the means of an escape.

As to that part of the report which mentions the guard-barracks being the repository for the arms of the guard off duty, and of its standing in the yard to which the hole in the wall would serve as a communication, and of its being a further cause of suspicion and alarm to Captain Shortland—to one acquainted with the situation of the prison, such an idea would be ridiculous; but to those who are not acquainted with it, it will be only necessary for us to mention, that if the prisoners had the intention of breaking out through this passage, and had actually got into the barrack-yard, the difficulties they would then have to encounter would be much greater than to break a passage through the market square, or the back part of the yard. As to the idea of their possessing themselves of the muskets standing in the racks in the guard-barracks (even if they knew of any being there) it is childish; for how easy would it have been for the commanding officer, on the shortest intimation of such an attempt, with one blast of his bugle, to have called all his guards to the spot before a hundredth part of the prisoners could have got into the yard, and by that means instantly put a stop to any further proceedings on their part.

We cannot conceive how Mr. King can possibly come forward and say, on these grounds, it appeared to him that Capt. Shortland was justified in giving the order for sounding the alarm bell, when, if he found the prisoners were conducting themselves improperly, had he sent for the committee (as always had been his custom heretofore, when he had any charge against the prisoners for improper conduct) and told them that the prisoners were breaking the wall (which circumstance, as has been published before, was not known to one tenth of the prisoners) and requested them to have represented to those engaged in it, the consequences that must ensue if they persisted in such conduct, we have not a moment's hesitation in saying, they would have put a stop to any further proceedings of that kind.

That part which relates to the breaking of the iron chain which fastened No. 1 gate, and which follows next in the report, says there was no evidence to show whether it was done before or after the alarm bell rang. As this was a material point on which they grounded Shortland's justification, we have to regret that the evidence we had to lay before the commissioners, and which would, in our opinion, have sufficiently cleared up that point, was not examined.

On the ringing of the alarm bell, the rush towards the gates leading into the market square was so great (attracted as has been before stated by curiosity) that those in front were irresistibly pushed forward by those in the rear, and if the chain had not broke the lock must have given way to the pressure, and by this opening, it is but natural to suppose, that a number must have been shoved

into the square in front of the soldiers, who were drawn up in a line across the square, with Shortland at their head.

If, as the report now goes on to state, there was no direct proof before them of a previous concert or preparation on the part of the prisoners, and no evidence of their intention or disposition to effect their escape on this occasion, excepting that which arose by *inference* from the whole of the detailed circumstances connected together, had Mr. King examined the evidence on the part of the prisoners, as minutely as it seems he examined those on the part of Shortland, he could not even have drawn the *shadow of an inference* of that being their intention.

Where the commissioners got their evidence for asserting that Capt. Shortland, by quiet means and persuasion, endeavored to persuade the prisoners to retire into their respective yards, is unaccountable to us, as those who know Captain Shortland, know he is not a man of persuasion.—It is correct that Dr. M'Grath used every exertion to persuade the prisoners to retire out of the square, which if Shortland had allowed sufficient time, would have been quietly done—but the crowd, by this time, had become so great, and the pressure from the rear so strong, that those in front could not retreat until time should be allowed for those in the rear to fall back, but the hasty, haughty, and overbearing temper of Shortland could not allow him to use such conciliatory means. He orders (the report says) fifteen file of the guard fronting the open gate, to the charge; and after some little time the charge was so effectual, with but very little or no injury to the prisoners, as to drive them, for the most part, quite out of the square, with the exception of a small number who continued their resistance about No. 1 gate. Under these circumstances, continued the report, the firing commenced.

Here we beg leave to request an attentive perusal of the affidavits of some of the prisoners, taken by the committee, and which relate particularly to this part of the transaction. It is there positively stated that on the soldiers coming to the charge the prisoners ALL retreated into the yard and pushed the gate to after them. If the commissioners had examined that evidence, this part of report ought to have been differenetly expressed.

We cannot conceive how Mr. King finds it difficult to reconcile the testimony respecting Captain Shortland's giving the orders to fire; when he reports that SEVERAL of the Americans SWEAR POSITIVELY, that Captain Shortland gave that order—and many of the soldiers and the English witnesses heard the word given by some one, but could not swear it was by Captain Shortland; and some of them (among whom is the officer commanding the guard) THINK, if Capt. Shortland had given such an order, they must have heard it, which they did not. Thus, then, stands the foundation for this part of the report. An English officer

THINKS it is not so, and several Americans SWEAR it is so; and he finds it very difficult to reconcile their testimony. The lightness with which they seem to have passed over this most important point of that day's transaction, cannot but be deeply regretted by those who feel for the unhappy sufferers, when they go on to state, "It may remain a matter of doubt whether the firing first began in the square by an ORDER, or whether it was a spontaneous act of the soldiers themselves; it seemed clear it was continued and renewed both there and elsewhere, without orders—and that on the platforms and several places about the prison it *was certainly commenced without any authority.*" We must once more request the attention of the public to the affidavits already published; it is there sworn by one of the witnesses, that PREVIOUS to the alarm bell being rung, and while walking in the yard, *a soldier called to him from the walls and told him to go in, as they would soon be fired upon.* How, then, can it be possible, that a soldier on the walls should know that they would soon be fired upon, if the order had not been previously given to that effect? And had the bugle-man been examined, he could have stated, that previous to the ringing of the alarm bell, he received orders to *sound to fire;* so that when the soldiers took their stations on the walls, they were charged and prepared for that purpose. With such information, we conceive the committee to stand fully justified in stating in their report, the belief of its being a pre-concerted plan, on the part of Shortland; and if the commissioners had possessed themselves with a knowledge of these circumstances, which they could and ought to have done, would they, then, reported Shortland as justifiable, even in a *military* point of view?

The next thing we have to notice in the report is, that very singular paragraph, which says, "from the fact of the crowd being so close, and the firing at *first* being attended with *very little injury,* it appears probable, that a large proportion of the muskets were, as stated by one or two of the witnesses, levelled over the heads of the prisoners, a circumstance, in some respects, to be *lamented.*" Is it, then, to be *lamented,* that the soldiers did not level their pieces, on the *first* fire, directly into the crowd, which they have stated to be so great and so close that a soldier declared he could not come fairly down to a charge; or is it to be *lamented,* that one or two hundred were not killed at the first discharge, and a thousand or two wounded? If so, we think it much to be *lamented,* that the reporters were not there, and placed foremost in the crowd.

The circumstance of so few being hurt at the first discharge is not strange to those who are acquainted with the situation; and this occurrence alone corroborates the American evidence, and ought to have been sufficient proof to the commissioners that the prisoners upon being charged upon, retreated through the gates, and shut them after them, before the firing commenced; and which circum-

stance alone, should have shut the door of jurisdiction against Shortland for commencing a fire upon them, as they were in their own yards. As this was the actual situation of the prisoners on the first discharge and the soldiers having to fire through the iron paling, and the prisoners retreating on a descending ground, of course brought the muskets, when down to a level, over the heads of the prisoners—it was owing to this *fortunate* circumstance that so few were injured on the first discharge of the musketry; and it seems the inhuman Shortland was aware of this circumstance, when he was distinctly heard to order his soldiers to fire low. This does not appear to correspond with that part of their report which says, "Capt. Shortland was in the market square exerting himself in giving orders to stop the firing."

That there was any provocation given to the soldiers to justify their subsequent brutal conduct, the commissioners themselves seem to find it very difficult to trace any evidence, although they say, it appears, that there was some resistance made to the turnkeys in shutting the prison, and that stones were thrown at the military. Had they examined the *prisoners* sufficiently, they would have been convinced that no resistance was made to the turnkeys in shutting the doors. As to throwing stones at the military while they were chasing them from corner to corner, and firing at them in every place where they had taken shelter from the balls, could it be expected but they would seize on something for self-defense, when they saw the soldiers running at them with their bayonets, and having no possible means of escape, as it has been before stated, all the doors in the prisons had been previously closed except one, perhaps, the length of the prison from him. Is there a man, in such a situation, but would seize on the first weapon that offered itself, and sell his life as dear as possible. How can they, then, make that the slightest justification for such outrageous conduct on the part of Shortland or the military?

As to most of the officers being absent is erroneous; it could have been proved that there was an officer in every yard, and in one instance where he was heard to give the order to fire on a party of prisoners close by the door, and running and making every exertion to enter the prison.

As to Capt. Shortland being busy in the square with the turnkeys, receiving and taking care of the wounded, certainly shows the commissioners' want of correct information, for it is already before the public, in affidavit, the cruel manner in which the wounded were treated by him, and of his abuse to the prisoners who were bearing the wounded to the hospital gate. That part of the report which relates that the time and commencement of this transaction was the officers' dinner hour, is too ridiculous for a comment. We do not believe that there was a

prisoner in the depot that knew when or where the officers dined, and therefore, can be no ground for an argument, that the prisoners were taking this opportunity to escape.

The report goes on to state, "the cross-fire, which was kept up from several of the platforms on the walls round the prison, and directed against straggling parties of prisoners running about the yard, endeavoring to enter the prison by the door which the turnkey left open, according to their usual practice *does seem* to have been without object or excuse, and to have been a wanton attack upon the lives of defenseless, and, at the same time, unoffiending individuals." In answer to this paragraph, we shall only reply, that had the commissioners examined ALL the American evidence, and attached the same credit to it, which it appears they have done to ALL the English evidence, similar expressions would have been made use of against Shortland's conduct throughout the whole of their report.

It appears to us, after an attentive examination of this report, that the commissioners meant to justify Shortland in commencing his murderous attack upon the prisoners, and to condemn the soldiers for continuing it. Singular as this idea appears, it is no less strange to us, how it can be possible they could reconcile it to their feelings to make up a report containing such a direct contradiction to reason; for surely if Shortland could be justified in using coercive measures in the first instance, the military certainly should be acquitted for the subsequent massacre, as the whole was conducted under his immediate command;—and if he had a RIGHT to kill one, on the same ground he might have extended it to a thousand. And, on the other hand, if any part of the transaction is to be condemned, Shortland should answer for the whole; for what necessity could there be made to attempt identifying any of the soldiers? Surely the commissioners could not think of bringing them to punishment, as they acted by the direct orders of Shortland and his officers?—and if any one could or ought to be made to answer for the outrage, it should be Shortland.

In addition to the contradictions contained in the commissioners' joint report, Mr. King, in his letter to his excellency, J. Q. Adams, almost denies the ground on which they have, in part founded Shortland's justification, when he says (alluding to have heard several Americans *swear, positively,* that Shortland did give the order to fire, and an officer of the guard *thinking* that he did not, as he should have heard him) "perhaps the bias of my mind was, that Shortland did give that order; and wishing the report to go forth under our joint signatures, I forbore to press some of the points so far as otherwise I MIGHT have done."

If, then, any part has been neglected, or passed over for accommodation, or

any other purpose (and one there certainly has, in not paying the same attention to the American as was done to the English evidence) it is to be regretted that Mr. King should so far forget the sacred duties attached to the appointment of a commissioner to enquire into the murder of his countrymen, as to pass over any points which might have brought to light the means of punishment for the murder, or obtained in some measure an indemnity for the surviving unhappy sufferers.

Will not the shades of the departed victims haunt him in his midnight slumbers, and pointing to their lacerated bodies, say, these still remain unavenged? Will not the unhappy survivors show the stumps of their amputated limbs, and say, these wounds fester, and still remain unatoned? Will not the widow and the helpless orphan raise their innocent hands to heaven, and cry, why was justice denied us? Why was the heart so callous to our sufferings?—And why was the bosom shut to sympathy? Let Mr. King point out some means to appease these bitter complaints, and we shall be satisfied.

We shall now close these unpleasant remarks, by noticing another unaccountable error in Mr. King's letter to Mr. Adams, where he mentions, speaking of Shortland, "and his general conduct, previous to this occurrence, as far as I could with propriety enter into such details, appears to have been characterised with great fairness and even kindness in the relation in which he stood towards the prisoners." We shall not pretend to ask Mr. King where he obtained the evidence on which he grounds this assertion; we are sure it was not from the prisoners, who ought to have been the best judges of that circumstance; but, instead of all that, all the Americans who were permitted to express an opinion on that subject, at the examination, declared, without reserve, as would all the prisoners in the depot, had they been asked the question, that Shortland's conduct, from the commencement of his appointment to that station, had been cruel, oppressive, and overbearing, and, instead of taking measures to alleviate the distresses of the wretched objects under him, as a feeling man would have done, he seemed to take a pleasure in harassing them whenever he could find the slightest pretext for so doing.

*W. Colton, Joseph Swain, Arch'd Taylor, David Ingalls, Reuben Sherman, Arch'd I. Mackay, Philip Black, Homer Hall, James B. Mansfield, Abr'm M'Intire, Wm. Cochran, Henry Dolliver, John Jones, B. Weeks, Wm. Demerell, Thomas Ward, William K. White.*

## REMARKS.

In presenting to the world the record of a transaction, probably the most barbarous which the history of modern warfare can furnish, we cannot refrain

from remarks—Whatever our feelings may be, upon a subject so amply calculated to excite the indignation and abhorrence of every friend to humanity, and every one who has respect for the laws of civilized and mitigated warfare, we will, nevertheless, refrain, so far as the circumstances of outraged humanity will permit, from the violence of invective, and wholly from unwarranted crimination. Those, into whose hands these documents may fall, will, however, preserve them as a monument erected to the memory of their slaughtered countrymen, and a memento of the unfeeling cruelty of our late enemy.

Though we are far from believing that there are not persons of noble and humane minds in the English nation, yet, a uniformity of conduct, on the part of the Government and its agents, has taught us to believe that they, at least, are blood thirsty and cruel.

The incarceration of Americans in the Jersey Prison Ship at New York, and Mill Prison, in England, in the Revolutionary war, raised in the minds of the sainted heroes of those times, the most exalted feelings of indignation and abhorrence. The history of those prisoners, where hundreds were compelled to wear out an existence, rendered miserable by the cruelty of an enemy, professing a reverence for the sublime principles of Christianity, is already familiarized to the minds of the American people. If the feelings of Americans were then indignant, what *should* they be, on beholding those cruelties renewed with more than ten fold severity? The conduct of *Thomas George Shortland,* the agent at Dartmoor Prison, is such as should "damn him to everlasting fame."

Upon what principles the conduct of this man, precedent to the ever memorable 6th of April, 1815, can be justified, we cannot determine. The indiscriminate confinement of both officers and men in the same prisons, and those the *most unfit, decayed, and loathsome* of any which the Government could furnish, was an infraction of the established laws of civilized nations for the treatment of prisoners of war. It was equally abhorrent to the principles of humanity, and only sanctioned by British governmental agents, and those petty Nations of Savages, whose known usages of warfare have hitherto kept them beyond the pale of national law. The history of modern European wars can furnish no parallel to this part of the history of Dartmoor. But when we arrive at the slaughter of prisoners on the 6th of April, the climax of barbarity is complete, and the mind is sated with the contemplation of principles as shocking to humanity as the consequences are degrading to the character of the English nation.

An eminent writer upon national law, has formerly extolled the "English and French for their treatment given to prisoners of war," and at the same time mentions the case of Charles I, King of Naples, who having defeated and taken

prisoner CONRADE, his competitor, caused him, together with his fellow-prisoner, Frederick of Austria, to be beheaded at Naples. Upon this case our author has the following pertinent remarks:—"This barbarity raised an universal horror, and Peter the third, King of Arragon, reproached Charles with it, as a detestable crime, till then unheard of among Christian princes. However, the case was of a dangerous rival contending with him for the throne. But, supposing the claims of his rival were unjust, Charles might have kept him in prison until he had renounced them, and given security for his future behavior." If this act of Charles raised an "universal horror," what should be the excitement produced by the cold blooded massacre of a number of unarmed and unoffending prisoners of war in confinement? Humanity shudders at the thought, and language furnishes no appropriate epithet with which to brand the infamous perpetrator of so foul, or hitherto unheard of a crime. Did that writer now live, he would no longer extol the humanity of the English nation, but in common with the friends of humanity, he would join in the *"universal horror"* which British cruelty has excited.

The complexion of this transaction is rendered still more dark and barbarous, and its criminality most shockingly enhanced, by the circumstances under which many of those unfortunate men became prisoners, and finally were offered up as victims to gratify the cruel and insatiate feeling of the British agent. *They were American Citizens, who had been impressed into the service and bondage of Great Britain, in time of peace.* They had served that government from a necessity, arising from the assumed principle of a right to search neutral vessels for British seamen, and the practice of taking Americans and compelling them to service. We cannot, however, too much applaud the magnanimity of those men, in refusing to fight against and slaughter their countrymen; nor can we too much detest the conduct of Great Britain, in confining them as prisoners of war.

This practice assumed as a right in the first moments of our existence as an independent and commercial nation, has "grown with our growth," and the evil thereof has increased in a proportion as our commercial rivalship has become more alarming to the pride and injustice of Great Britain. It is a practice which cannot be traced to any principal of justification; and *yet we have seen the legislators of Massachusetts, clothed with a garb of official sanctity, send to the world a report, amounting almost to a denial, that such a practice was in existence!* We pretend not to judge of their motives; but we remark, how soon they are confounded by the report of *Shortland* and *Magrath.* By that instrument it appears, that of *thirty-eight* who were *killed or wounded, twelve* were of the number of *Impressed Americans,* who had given themselves up as prisoners of

war, upon the commencement of hostilities. If this be the correct proportion of their prisoners, who have been impressed from American vessels, and as it is an official document of British authority, we cannot believe the ratio to be less, we see the advocates of British magnanimity confounded and put to shame, by the testimony of those same British agents, whose justification they have so eagerly, though unsuccessfully attempted. It might, indeed, have been supposed, that after having so frequently been treated with the same contempt, they might have learned sufficient caution, at least, to stay their measures until the pleasure of their transatlantic friends should be known. But their overweening anxiety has only tended to plunge them in deeper embarrassments, and should teach them, that more prudence and less zeal in the cause of a national enemy, might secure them a safer retreat in the moments when those whose friendship they had so anxiously sought, had deserted, and condemned them.

By the report of the Legislature of Massachusetts upon the subject of impressments, it would appear, that no more than *sixteen* had been impressed from this Commonwealth. What must be our conclusion upon a comparison of this report, with that of Messrs. Shortland and Magrath? It is irresistable, either that the former did not report the full number of impressments, or that the latter have aggravated their guilt and condemnation, by swelling the number to a degree beyond what the facts would justify, from some cause, unknown to their American advocates and in favor of the facts and principles, for which the American government have uniformly contended. A few of those assumed as facts, by the present dominant party in New England, may aid us in this enquiry and perhaps conduct as to a correct conclusion. They have repeatedly told us, that New England, and more particularly Massachusetts, has ever been the nursery of our seamen. That this section had furnished more than the whole remaining part of the United States. Admitting the correctness of the report of Shortland and Magrath, we are wholly unable to reconcile the report of our Legislature with those which they assume as facts, and upon which the principles of their report were, in part, predicated. It exhibits to our view a disposition to fritter away the enormities of the British Government and a determination to justify them in every act of barbarity, however unjustifiable in its circumstances, or however shocking in its operation.

The report of Messrs. King and Larpent may here claim a portion of our attention. Unpleasant as the task may be to reflect, even indirectly upon the conduct of one of our countrymen acting in the high and solemn capacity to which Mr. King was called, we cannot, however, without doing violence to our own feelings, and criminating numbers of our countrymen, perhaps equally entitled to credibility with Mr. King himself, afford our credence to his singular

report; especially when we see it contradicted unconditionally, by the unfortunate witnesses of the unhappy and barbarous transaction.

Even Mr. King himself, in his letter to Mr. Adams, furnishes a tardy acknowledgment, that he had not completed the duties to which he had been called. "Considering it of much importance (he says) that the report, whatever it might be, should go forth under our joint signatures, I have forborne to press some of the points which it involves as far as otherwise I might have done." And why did Mr. King forbear to press every point involved in the report? Was it from a disposition to perform his whole duty to his country; or, rather, from a too common admiration of British principles and British characters.

The numerous affidavits accompanying the report made by the committee of the prisoners, together with the reply to the report of Messrs. King and Larpent, afford the most positive testimony in contradiction to many of its prominent features. We can form no other opinion respecting this report, than either that Mr. King was overreached by his colleague, or that he was predetermined to fritter down the abuses which the British Government and its agents had lavished upon their American prisoners. Why either Messrs. King or Larpent should decline the examination of *all* the witnesses offered by the prisoners, is wholly inexplicable, unless we attribute to them a mutual and fixed determination to justify the conduct of Shortland and his accomplices, at the expense of criminating hundreds of Americans, who were no less entitled to credibility than either of themselves. Hereafter, *"let no such men be trusted."*

The treatment to the prisoners appears to have proceeded from the same principles of inhumanity which have given rise to the hostile operations of the British Commanders upon our maritime and inland frontiers, during the continuance of the late contest. Such principles belong only to Savages or their allies. The outrages at the river Raisin, Hampton, Havre-de-Grace, Washington and those attempted at New Orleans, it was thought, might have filled the measure of British barbarities. But to the prisons of Dartmoor was transferred the scene of its completion. Americans, armed in defense of their soil, their Constitution, and natural rights, were too invincible to the "veteran" conquerors of the East. *Prisoners of war in confinement, and without arms, were selected as the objects upon which they might glut their malice.*

We have heard much from a certain class of our politicians of the burning of Newark and St. David's; but little have they said of the destruction of Buffalo, of Washington City, or the massacre of our unfortunate countrymen at Dartmoor; *and that little has been directed to the justification of the perpetrators.* The conflagration of our Capitol, with the appendages of art and taste, and even

the slaughter of our countrymen, could not excite in those minds one feeling of indignation; whilst the unauthorised destruction of a few houses, within the territorial limits of our enemy, not only excited their warmest sympathies for the enemy, but their foulest denunciations of our own Government.

We might here attempt a comparison of the treatment of each Government to their prisoners. But the contrast is so evident, that we shall commit it to our readers without remark.

Where is the American, whose feelings do not become indignant, after a full and dispassionate view of all the circumstances connected with this savage transaction —Though we may again be told, that Great Britain is the *"Bulwark of our Religion;"* yet it may be hoped, that few, indeed, will be found to worship in a temple stained with the blood of their countrymen or consign their consciences to the keeping of the upholders of the temple of Juggernaut, or the restorers of Papal power.

Though our policy as an Independent Republic is pacific, yet should our rights again be assailed, and future wars ensue, WE WILL REMEMBER DARTMOOR!

The night following the shocking massacre was spent in deep disquietude. As we knew not what had actually occasioned this, in some degree, deliberate slaughter, so we were filled with anxiety as to its final termination. The horrors of Paris, under Robespiere, rose to view, and deprived us of sleep; or if wearied nature got a moment's relief, many waked up screaming with the impression, that they were under the hands of a murderer dressed in red.

The gates of our prison were closed up in the morning, and each one seemed describing to his neighbor what he had seen and heard; and every one execrating the villain who had occasioned the massacre. In the course of the day, a British colonel, whom we had never before seen, appeared at the inner gate, attended by the detestible Shortland, who was pale and haggard like ordinary murderers. The colonel asked us, generally, *What was the cause of this unhappy state of things?* We related some particulars as well as we could; but all united in accusing Capt. Thomas Shortland of deliberate murder. On Shortland's denying some of the ac-

cusations, the colonel turned round to him, and said, in a very serious tone, *"Sir, you have no right to speak at this time."* Upon which I thought the valiant captain would have fainted. He, doubtless, thought of an halter. The colonel went to the other yards, and received, as we were informed, statements not materially differing from what he first heard. The colonel's manner left an agreeable impression on our minds. He appeared to be seriously grieved, and desirous to find out the truth.

The next day major general Brown came up from Plymouth in the forenoon, and made some trifling inquiries in the afternoon. Soon after came admiral Rowley, and a captain in the navy, whose name I do not remember. They went into the military walk over the gates, when the space below was soon filled with prisoners. The admiral did not impress us quite so agreeably as the colonel, who seemed to speak and look his own good feelings; while the former appeared to have got his lesson, and have come prepared to question us, like an attorney rather than like a frank and open seaman. The admiral informed the prisoners that he was appointed by the commander in chief at Plymouth to inquire, *whether the prisoners had any cause for complaint against the British government, as to their* PROVISIONS? There ensued a short silence, until our countryman, Mr. *Colton,* a man who was neither intimidated by rank, nor disconcerted by parade, answered him and said, that "the affair of *provisions* was not the occasion of their present distress and anxiety, but that it was the horrid massacre of their unoffending and unresisting countrymen, whose blood cried from the ground, like the blood of Abel, for justice. We have nothing now to say about our provisions; that is but a secondary concern. Our cry is for due vengeance on the murderer Shortland, to expiate the horrors of the 6th of April. We all complain of his haughty, unfeeling, and tyrannical conduct, at all times, and on all occasions."—"THAT WE HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH," said the admiral, and then repeated the former question, relative to the British

government and the provisions; to which Mr. Colton replied in a still more exasperated tone of accusation against the murderer and the murder. *"Then you do not,"* said the admiral, *"complain of the British government for detaining you here?"* "By no means," said our spokesman, "the prisoners, one and all, ascribe our undue attention here, to a neglect of duty in our own agent, Mr. Beasley." *"Then I hope,"* said the admiral, *"that you will all remain tranquil. I lament* AS MUCH AS YOU, *the unfortunate occurrence that has taken place."* Upon this, Mr. Colton mentioned particularly the murder of the boy who was shut up in No. 4, after the prisoners were all driven in through the doors, and averred that he was killed by the direct order of a British officer, who came to the door with some of the guard. *"That is the lobster-backed villain,"* exclaimed a young man, *"that stands behind you, sir! who, I heard deliberately order his men to fire on the prisoners, after they had all got into the building. I saw him, and heard him give the orders, and had liked to have been bayonetted myself by his soldiers."* The Admiral looked round on the officer, who reddened almost to a purple, and sneaked away, and was seen no more; and thus ended what was probably called Admiral R's examination into the causes of the massacre!

I know of no examination after this, if such an interview may be called an examination; for on the — of April, myself and a few others were set at liberty. We had made application the night before, and passed the night in sleepless anxiety. At 10 o'clock orders were sent down to collect our things. We dare not call our wretched baggage, by any other than the beggarly name of *"duds."* In consequence of this order, the turnkey conveyed us to the upper gate, where we remained a while fluttering between fear and hope. At length the sergeant of the guard came, and opened the gate, and conducted us to the guard-room, where our fears began to dissipate and our hopes to brighten. When the clerk entered, he must have seen anxiety in our countenances, and was disposed

to sport with our feelings. He put on a grave and solemn phiz, mixed with a portion of the insolence of office, as if he were about to read our death-warrants, while we cast a look of misery at each other. At length, with apparent reluctance, he vouchsafed to hand to each of us, like a miser paying a debt, the dear delicious paper, the evidence of our liberty! on which was written, "by order of the transport board." This was enough. We devoured it with our eyes, clinched it fast in our fists, laughed, capered, jumped, screamed, and kicked up the dirt like so many mad men; and away we started for Princetown, looking back as we ran, every minute, to see if our Cerberus with his bloody jaws, was not at our heels. At every step we took from the hateful prison, our enlarged souls expanded our lately cramped bodies. At length we attained a rising ground; and O, how our hearts did swell within us at the sight of the OCEAN! that ocean that washed the shores of our dear America, as well as those of England. After taking breath, we talked in strains of rapture to each other. This ground, said I, belongs to the British; but that *ocean,* and this air, and that sun, are as much ours as theirs; or as any other nations. They are blessings to that nation which knows best how to deserve and enjoy them. May the arm of bravery secure them all to us, and to our children forever. Long and dismal as our captivity has been, we declared with one voice, that should our government again arm and declare war for *"free trade and sailors' rights,"* we would, in a moment, again try the tug of war, with the hard hearted Britons; but with the fixed resolution of never being taken by them alive; or, at least, unwounded, or unmutilated. I see, I feel that the *love of country* is our "ruling passion"; and it is this that has and will give us the superiority in battle, by land and by sea, while the want of it will cause some folks to recoil before the American bayonet and bullets, as the British did at Chippewa, Erie, Plattsburg and New Orleans.

While the British prisoner retires from our places of confinement

in good health, and with unwilling and reluctant step, we, half famished Americans, fly from theirs as from a pestilence, or a mine just ready to explode. If the British cannot alter these feelings in the two nations, her power will desert her, while that of America will increase.

After treading the air, instead of touching the ground, we found ourselves at the Devonshire Arms in Princetown, where the comely bar-maid appeared more than mortal. The sight of her rosy cheeks, shining hair, bright eyes, and pouting lips, wafted our imaginations, in the twinkling of an eye, across the Atlantic to our own dear country of pretty girls. I struck the fist of my right hand into the palm of my left, and cried out—*"O, for an horse with wings!"* The girl stared with amazement, and concluded, I guess, that I was mad; for she looked as if she said to herself—"poor crazy lad! who ever saw a horse with wings?"

We called for some wine, and filling our glasses, drank to the power, glory and honor, and everlasting happiness of our beloved country; and after that to all the pretty girls in America. During this, we, now and then, looked around us, to be certain that all this was not a dream, and asked each other if they were sure there was no *red coat* watching our movements, or surly turn-key listening to our conversation? and whether what we saw were really the walls of an house, where ingress and egress were equally free? It is inconceivable how we are changed by habit. Situations and circumstances ennoble the mind or debase it.

From what I myself experienced, and saw in others, on the day we left our hateful prison, I do not wonder that sudden transitions from the depressing effects of imprisonment, sorrow, chagrin, impatience, or feelings bordering on despair, to that of liberty and joy, should so affect the vital organs, as to bring on a fatal spasm, or that the sudden exhilarations of the animal spirits, might produce phrenzy. We were animated anew with a moderate portion of

generous liquor; but absolutely intoxicated with joy. We asked a thousand questions without waiting for an answer. In the midst of our rapture we had a message from Shortland, who seemed to be afraid that we should be so near him, and yet out of his power, that if we did not hasten our march on to Plymouth, he would have us brought back to prison. At the sound of his hateful name, and the idea of his person, we started off like so many wild Zebras. We, however, stepped a little out of the road to an eminence, to take another, and a last look of the Dartmoor *dépôt* of misery, when we saw waving over it, the American flag, like the colors *sans tache,* waving over the walls of Sodom and Gomorrha. We gave three cheers, and then resumed our road to Plymouth, where we soon after arrived.

While dining at the inn, an old man, in the next room, hearing we were Americans, came in, and asked us if we knew his son who lived in America, and mentioned his name. Yes, said one of my companions; he is a mechanic; I think a carpenter—I know him very well, and he is a very clever fellow. The old man caught hold of him, and shook him by the hand as if he would shake his arm off. "Yes, yes, you are right, my son is a ship carpenter, and it almost broke my heart when he went off to seek his fortune in a far country." In the fulness of his heart, the poor old man offered to treat us with the best liquor the house afforded; but we all excused ourselves and declined his generosity. This would have been carrying the joke too far, for neither of us ever had any knowledge of his son. We felt happy; and we thought, if we thought at all, that we would make the old man happy also. The English and Americans are equally addicted to bantering, hoaxing, quizzing, humming, or by whatever ridiculous name we may denote this more than ridiculous folly. I never heard that the French, Germans, Spaniards, or Italians were addicted to this *unbenevolent* wit, if cowardly imposition can merit that name.

As we strolled through Plymouth we gazed at every thing we

saw, as if we had just fallen into it from the moon. In staring about we lost our way, and accosted a grave-looking elderly man, who directed us. As we asked him several questions, he thought he had a right to ask one of us; when, to our surprise, he asked us *if we had any gold to sell?* We now perceived that we had taken for our director one of the sons of Abraham, whose home is no where, and that he took us to be either privateersmen or pick-pockets. Piqued at this, we thought we would be even with him, and we asked him if his name was not *Shortland?* He said no. We asked him if he had no relations of that name. He enquired if dat Shortland vas Jew or Christian? We told him he was neither one or the other. Den, said Moses, he must be *Turk;* for dere be but three sort of peoples in the vorld; and this set us a laughing at the expence of the despised Israelite, until we lost him in some of the dirty alleys of this noisy seaport.

I slept that night at the Exchange Coffee House. It was so long since I had been cut off from the decencies of life, that I could hardly be said to enjoy them. I could not, at first, reconcile myself to the civil attention of servants and waiters. At the hour of sleep, I was shown to such a bed as I used to sleep on in my father's house.—But who would believe it, that my predominant misery during this night, was a *feather bed* and a *pillow,* rendered uneasy because it was as soft as down! Yes, astonished reader! I felt about as uneasy in a feather bed, as Mr. Beasley, or any other fine London gentleman would, at laying on a plank, or the ballast of a transport. Such is the power of habit, and such the effect of custom.

The next morning before I left my bed, I pondered over the events and conduct of the preceding day, but not with satisfaction, or self approbation. The seventh chapter of Ecclesiastes came fresh to my mind. I said to myself, adversity and constraint are more favourable to wisdom, than liberty and prosperity; or to express it in better words—"*sorrow is better than laughter, for by*

*the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better;* and for this maxim of wisdom we are indebted to a Jew.

We remained a fortnight longer in Plymouth, and learnt by degrees to relish civility. We were kindly noticed by several good people, who seemed to be rather partial to us Americans than otherwise. While there, I heard but very little uttered against America, or Americans. We were spoken to, and treated infinitely better than at Halifax. By the time of our embarkation, which was the 23d of April, 1815, we felt considerable attachment to the people about us. We arrived at New York the 7th of June following, without any thing occurring in the passage worth committing to paper, unless it be to record the striking contrast in our feelings in our passage *to,* and FROM England.

My sensations on first setting my foot once more on my native soil, were such as I have not power to describe. Tears gushed from my eyes, and had I not been ashamed, I should have kneeled down and kissed the earth of the UNITED STATES. I believe similar sensations, more or less, fill the bosom of every American, on returning to his own country from British captivity. It is hardly possible that I shall, so long as my faculties remain entire, forget the horrors of the British transports, and several scenes and sufferings at Dartmoor Prison: yet I hope to be able, before I quit this world of contention, to forgive the contempts, the contumely, the starvations and filthiness inflicted on me and on my countrymen, by an unfeeling enemy, while we remained in his power as prisoners of war, at Halifax, on ship board, and at Dartmoor.

RETURN we, from this gloomy view,
To native scenes, of fairer hue.
Land of our fires! the Hero's home!
Weary and sick, to thee we come;
The heart fatigued with foreign woes,
On thy fair bosom seeks repose.
COLUMBIA! hope of future times!

Thou wonder of surrounding climes!
Thou last and only resting place
Of Freedom's persecuted race!
Hail to thy consecrated domes!
Thy fruitful fields, and peaceful homes;
The hunter, thus, who long has toil'd
O'er mountain rude, and forest wild,
Turns from the dark and cheerless way,
Where howls the savage beast of prey,
To where yon curls of smoke aspire,
Where briskly burns his crackling fire;
Towards his cot delighted moves,
Cheered by the voice of those he loves,
And welcomed by domestic smiles,
Sings cheerly, and forgets his toils.

## POSTSCRIPT.

SOME, to whom I had shown my Journal in manuscript, have thought that I had, now and then, expressed my feelings too unguardedly against some of the subjects of Great Britain, and some of my own countrymen. In consequence of this friendly remark, I have struck out a few passages, but have not been able to comply with all the wishes of my connexions. But, after all, had a political cant phrase or two been omitted some good people would have been gratified, and the publication not the worse for it. I have severely suffered, felt keenly, and expressed myself honestly, and without malice. I may not have made due allowance for the conduct of certain officers and agents. I may not have entered, as far as I ought, into their situations; and there might have been reasons and excuses, that my chafed feelings prevented me from attending to. If so, the cool and candid reader, both here, and on the other side of the Atlantic, will make that allowance which I could hardly make myself. I must, nevertheless, maintain, that I have expressed the feelings of the moment, and cannot now honestly alter my language; for whenever my soul calls up many occurrences in my captivity, my tongue and my pen will be found the faithful organs of my feelings.

I have endeavored to give due credit to the humane conduct of several sailors, soldiers, and private subjects of the enemy. But, if, at this period of peace, when it may be supposed that resentment was cooled down, I try to obliterate the impressions made by cruelty and by *contempt,* and find I cannot, then must

the reader take it as a trait of the imperfect character of a young man, on whose mind adversity has not had its best effect.

If an animosity actually exists between the English and Americans, do you mend the matter by denying the fact? This animosity has been avowed to exist, within a few months past, in the parliament of England. The following article is extracted from a London paper. In a debate, (Feb. 14th, 1816) a member said, "the spirit of animosity in America, would justify an increase of the naval force in the West Indies." This called up Lord Castlereagh, who said—"As to America, if it is said great prejudices exist there against us, it must be recollected that great prejudices exist here against her. It was," he said, "his most ardent wish to discountenance this feeling on both sides, and to promote between the two nations feelings of reciprocal amity and regard."

What has occasioned this avowed animosity in us towards the British? Our merchants, generally, feel not this animosity; neither is it to be found, in a great degree, amongst our legislators. How came we by it? Our sailors and our soldiers, who have been in British prisons, and on board British men of war, and *transports,* have brought with them this animosity home to their families and their friends. They tell them their own stories in their own artless, and sometimes exaggerated way, and these are reported with, probably, high coloring, whereas, I have made it a point of honor, a matter of conscience, and a rule of justice, to adhere to truth; and am contented that the British reader should say all that fairness admits, to soften down the coloring of some picture of British barbarity, provided he does not attempt to impeach my veracity.

Besides individual animosity, there may possibly be a lurking national one, thinly covered over with the fashionable mantle of courtesy. The conflicting interests of the two nations may endanger peace. The source of national aggrandizement in both nations, is commerce; and the high road to them the ocean. We and the British are travelling the same way, in keen pursuit of the same objects; and it is scarcely probable that we shall be preserved in a state of peace by abstract love of justice.

I have been disposed to allow that the conduct of our countrymen, while on board the prison ships and at Dartmoor, was, at times provoking to the British officers set over them, but never malignant, much less, bloody. It could be always traced to a spirit of *fun* and frolic, which our people indulge in beyond all others in the world; and this ought to be considered as one of the luxuriant shoots of our *tree of liberty;* for it is too harsh to call it an excrescence. It shows the strength, depth and extent of its roots, and the richness of the soil.

This Journal has not been published to increase the animosity now subsisting between the American and British people. So far from it, the writer pleases himself with the idea that this publication may remedy the evils complained of, or mitigate them; and cut off the source of deep complaint against the English, for their treatment of prisoners, should war rage again between the two nations. If the present race of Britons have not become indifferent to a sense of national character, their government will take measures to wipe off the stain from her garments. Let the nations of Europe inquire how the Americans treat their prisoners of war. If we treat them with barbarity publish our disgrace to the wide world, and speak of us accordingly. Let them, at the same time, inquire how the English treated those of us who have had the great misfortune of falling into their hands; and let them be spoken of accordingly. My serious opinion is, that this little book will aid the great cause of humanity.

Although I, with some thousands of my countrymen, were inclosed in a large prison during the greater part of the war, it fared with us as with those people who seldom go out of their houses, who hear more news than those who are abroad in the world. It was, however, pretty much all of one sort; for we seldom saw any other American news papers, than those of the federal, or opposition party. These were generally filled with abuse of the PRESIDENT, and of the government generally, and with praises of the English, which, in our situation, produced a strong sensation, as our support, our protection, our pride, our *honor* were identified in the person of the President, and his administration. The efforts of the federal party in Massachusetts to embarrass and tie the hands of our government, and disgrace its brave officers, created in us *all* a hatred of the very name of *federalism*. I record the fact, and appeal to all the prisoners who have now returned home, to confirm my assertion, and I declare I have erased not a little on this head out of courtesy to a large and sanguine party, who have erred, and strayed from the right way, by not knowing the true character of the English.

I feel no animosity, or disrespect to any gentleman of the federal, or opposition party; but they must excuse me for remarking that their conduct, and their sentiments, as they appeared in messages, proclamations, speeches and resolves, and their combinations for withholding loans of money from government, with their denunciations of a war, waged professedly, and as we knew, really, for *"Sailors' Rights,"* made an impression on our minds so decidedly against the federalists, that the very term, *federalism,* was with us *all,* without one single exception, a term of deep reproach. Let him who doubts it ask any prisoner who made a part of the six thousand confined in England during the two years of

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our late bitter war with England, and he will be satisfied that I have *"nothing extenuated, or set down aught in malice."*

I hope and pray for UNION among ourselves; and that all party names and distinctions, may be lost in that of AMERICANS.

"Henceforth let *Whig and Tory* cease,
And turn all party rage to peace;
Rouse and revive your ancient glory,
UNITE, *and drive the world before you!*"

THE END

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